

SELECTED
JAN 12 1989

AD-A203 571

Csp 2
1

LEADERSHIP IN COMBAT: AN HISTORICAL APPRAISAL

Conducted by History Dept., USMA, under the direction of LTC K.E. Hamburger

SUMMARY

The OPMS study Group asked the History Department at USMA to study successful combat leadership to identify the trends and characteristics that should be institutionalized in the development of Officers. There were only two restrictions: that the actions studied be in actual combat and that it must clearly involve leadership not management. The characteristics found were indispensable to combat leadership, but not necessarily vital or sufficient to accomplish other essential military tasks.

The USMA Study unit, organized under LTC Kenneth E. Hamburger, examined over 200 American and foreign examples in all periods. Both successful and unsuccessful examples were intensively analysed and discussed to sift out desirable, undesirable, and neutral characteristics. In addition, preservice experience, upbringing, education, service record, physical condition, personal temperament and morality, and life following the incident were studied.

There was surprising consistency among successful combat leaders regardless of historical period, country or condition of combat. Early in their lives, the traits that made them successful were discernible in some form and were enhanced, but could not be induced, through experience. In no case did a unit in combat overcome the deficiencies of its leader; in almost all cases the leader overcame startling unit deficiencies and incredible problems in mission definition, enemy physical and moral strength, troop, training, and equipment obstacles, weather and terrain conditions, bad luck, poor timing, misinformation, unreliable superiors and subordinates, and his own anxiety.

The complete study is available in VOL II, OPMS Study Report and will be published by USMA for use throughout the Army.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL COMBAT LEADERS

There were five personal characteristics that were present in every case and disaster ensued in their absence. They were terrain sense, single-minded tenacity, ferocious audacity, physical confidence, and practical, practiced judgement. (SDUG)

Terrain sense: the ability to quickly, almost intuitively, tactically judge terrain. This was the most essential characteristic and improved the most through experience. Often successful combat leaders made a fetish of personal reconnaissance, including repeated infiltration to view their own position from an enemy perspective. This understanding was a combination of technical appreciation and terrain analysis: it was one thing to see a landscape and know the range of the weapons, it was another to visualize the battle and how those weapons would be used.

Single-minded tenacity: Typical of all successful leaders was not an inflexible pursuit of a plan or even an objective, but rather an imaginative, driving intensity to accomplish the mission using everything that was

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A
Approved for public release
Distribution Unlimited

USMA ARCHIVE SCHOOL
FORT KNOX, KY 40121

USMA ARCHIVE SCHOOL
FORT KNOX, KY 40121

DTIC FILE COPY

refusal to surrender, more often surrender as an option simply did not occur to the commander. This was almost always tied to an unusually strong sense of moral courage and scrupulously ethical conduct in all things regarding combat or warfare.

Audacity: The willingness to take reasoned but enormous risks, was always present. Frequently, successful commanders would say it was the only thing they could do. In retrospect, their actions seemed inspired desperation. This was closely linked to a self-image, a feeling of certitude about themselves and their mission. Self-doubt was a rare thing and was usually a kind of anxiousness, almost never regarding previous decisions, and never revealed to even the closest subordinates.

Physical confidence and health: Vigorous, demanding physical activity was either a part of regular duties or a pastime. Athletic ability was not as important as was the sense of physical well-being and the self confidence engendered by regular physical activity regardless of age. Physical confidence also enhanced the self-image and the projected image of a successful combat leader.

Practiced, Practical Judgement: The most uncommon of virtues, common sense, was always present in the successful combat leader. This was marked by an ability to determine the vital from the unimportant, the immediate from the casual, and truth from deception, whether deliberate or accidental. It was improved by experience, but as with all other critical characteristics, was discernible at an early age.

Two characteristics commonly considered to be a part of the American leader's character (strong religious conviction and emotional attachment soldiers) were not vital to successful combat leadership, though often present.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE OFFICER PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM:

In general, the USMA study verifies "conventional wisdom". That is, most of the findings appear to agree with the present doctrinal concepts in leadership and personnel management, with minor exceptions. Once again it should be stressed that these conclusions apply only to combat leadership and that they were drawn without regard to other military tasks.

Among the more important implications for OPMS are:

- Some individuals appear to be "born leaders", while other individuals can be developed, but a solid foundation of "character" is essential in any successful leader.

- A variety of assignments in areas unrelated to troop leadership had little effect on the abilities of a combat leader. Successful performance on high level staffs and in "high visibility" assignments were not effective gauges of successful leaders.

o The qualities of an individual's personality which set him apart from other men and make him a leader whom soldiers will follow are probably present, to one degree or another, at every point in a successful combat leader's career, with only an evolutionary change over time. Those essential qualities of personality which make a General Officer a successful leader in combat are discernible, if less developed, early in his career.

o A variety of assignments in areas unrelated to troop leadership had little effect on the abilities of a combat leader. Successful performance on high level staffs and in "high visibility" assignments were not effective gauges of successful leaders. Officers can be extremely successful at a variety of demanding assignments unrelated to leading soldiers in combat and be abject failures as combat leaders.

o Native good judgment, or "common sense," is an absolute requirement for successful combat leadership. The ability to perform well in formal schooling, while not a negative characteristic, is a less important factor for a combat leader. In particular, the leader must have a well-developed and practiced ability in making decisions under pressure.

o Successful combat leadership at one level of command is not a solid guarantee of success at higher levels. If, however, failure at a lower level is attributable to the individual's failings as a leader, it may be an indicator of likely failure at higher levels.

o Physical fitness and good health are prerequisites for successful command at every level.

o Solid grounding in leadership early in service is required for later success.

o Technical competence is important for any combat leader; however, technical skills per se are not as important for a combat leader as is an appreciation of the capabilities of all the technological devices at his command.

o Short assignments in succession were negative factors.

o Officers who had avoided service with troops were generally not successful as combat leaders.

o The most salient predictor of a successful combat leader was successful leadership in peacetime, particularly of a tactical unit. Longer service before combat with the unit he would lead in combat appeared to improve his performance, probably by increasing unit cohesion and improving mutual trust between the leader and the unit.

per lti
A-1

3
4

• Native good judgement, or "common sense", is an absolute requirement for successful combat leadership. The ability to perform well in formal schooling, while not a negative characteristic, is a less important factor for a combat leader. In particular, the leader must have a well-developed and practiced ability in making decisions under pressure.

• Successful combat leadership at one level of command is not a solid guarantee of success at higher levels. If, however, failure at a lower level is attributable to the individual's failings as a leader, it may be an indicator of likely failure at a higher levels.

• Physical fitness and good health are prerequisites for successful command at every level.

• Solid grounding in leadership early in service is required for later success.

• Technical competence is important for any combat leader; however technical skills themselves are not as important for a combat leader as is an appreciation of the capabilities of all the technological devices at his command.

• Short assignments in succession were negative factors.

• Officers who had avoided service with troops were generally not successful as combat leaders.

• The most salient predictor of successful combat leadership was successful leadership in peacetime, particularly of a tactical unit. Longer service before combat with the unit he would lead in combat appeared to improve his performance, probably by increasing unit cohesion and improving mutual trust between the leader and the unit.

CPT Zacherl
OPMS Study Group
#5002

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Leadership in Combat: An Historical Appraisal

TAB A: Study Methodology and Limitations

TAB B: Historical Examples of Combat Leadership

TAB C: Selected Bibliography

LEADERSHIP IN COMBAT: AN HISTORICAL APPRAISAL

Study Goals

The ultimate functional role of any armed force is to engage in combat. For this reason, successful leadership in combat should be the aim of the system used to manage officers' careers in any army, and the production of combat leaders must be one of the most important goals of that system. Nonetheless, there is no unanimity of opinion as to what characterizes good combat leadership (other than the obvious criterion of success), and there is no accepted and verified method of producing leaders who will be successful in combat. The purpose of this study is to gain insights into what has historically characterized successful combat actions and combat leaders, and to try to determine what factors in the individuals' backgrounds caused them to develop into successful combat leaders.

At the request of the Officer Personnel Management Study Group, a committee of seven instructors of military history at the U.S. Military Academy was formed to conduct the study. All members of the committee were combat arms officers with advanced degrees in history and with multiple assignments in tactical units in their branch, including company command. The study was headed by an ex-battalion commander.

In the course of the study, the committee searched for and analyzed examples of successful and unsuccessful combat actions, seeking answers to two specific questions:

- o What have been the characteristics of leadership in successful combat actions and how have they differed from those traits observed in unsuccessful actions?
- o What personal, experiential, and institutional factors appear to have contributed to developing individuals into successful or unsuccessful leaders in combat?

Study Methodology

Initially, the committee gathered examples of successful and unsuccessful instances of combat leadership. The only restrictive criteria initially imposed was that the citations must be actions in actual combat and that the incident must involve leadership, not management. Thus, such events as successful fire support or resupply operations not involving enemy contact were eliminated at the outset, as were examples of successful staff work in support of combat operations. It should be stressed at this point that the sole focus of the study was on combat leadership. For this reason, many exemplary officers were not selected for study, as their records of combat leadership did not match those of the individuals selected.

Once the examples were gathered and reproduced, at least five members of the committee intensively analyzed each of them, attempting to discern whether the leader's actions were critical factors in determining the success of the engagement. In addition to such basic data as the time and place of the event, forces engaged, and commanders' names, committee members recorded the characteristics of the action. The characteristics of the leader and his "leadership style" were particular items of interest at this point of the study.

Upon completion of the analysis for leadership characteristics, the leaders themselves were studied. This research concentrated on the leader's background, looking for a variety of factors which were thought to be possible discriminators in causing a given individual to have become a successful or unsuccessful leader in combat. Some of the factors searched for included the leader's pre-service background and upbringing, his service record and education, combat experience, physical condition and health, personal characteristics, ethical and moral courage, and where appropriate, his career following the incident. (For a more complete outline of the methodology, see Tab A.)

Study Population

Over two hundred examples of combat leadership were initially gathered and screened. These included incidents in warfare throughout recorded history, from all areas of the world. Examples were gathered from all wars the United States has engaged in from the American Revolution through Vietnam. Initial screening involved several criteria: estimated worth of the event to the overall study; availability of detailed and reliable information on the event; availability of similar background information on the leader; and, in the case of foreign examples, an additional criterion of the estimated applicability of the incident to the leadership of American soldiers.

The final population which was more intensively researched consisted primarily of officers of the United States, in the twentieth century. Except for a few examples from Great Britain, Israel, and Germany, foreign examples were rejected either because there was not enough information readily available on the background of the leader, or because the committee felt that the cultural milieu of the example was so different from that of the U.S. Army today that "lessons" derived from the incident would not have applicability for OPMS.

Although the committee considered the question of females in combat, no historical examples available appeared to be relevant to current or projected OPMS policy. For this reason, no female combat leaders were included in the final study population.

The Nature of Successful and Unsuccessful Combat Leadership

Although no two combat actions are identical, salient characteristics of successful combat leadership tend to be generally identifiable, and in virtually every example of leadership studied, the successful leaders possessed certain common qualities to one degree or another.

Successful leaders were firmly in control of their units and were recognized as such by all concerned. They were almost always physically fit, in the sense of being conditioned for strenuous exertion. This fitness enhanced their image of being "the man in charge." The successful leader somehow had the ability always to be at the decisive point on the ground at the time he was most needed to influence the action. This was probably a function of his knowledge of terrain, as an appreciation for the ground on which he engaged in combat was a strong point in almost every success story, and a failure to appreciate terrain was the ingredient which led to disaster on more than one occasion. The successful leader made a fetish of properly conducted personal reconnaissances, to the extent of more than once moving into enemy-held territory to view his own lines as the enemy would see them.

The successful leader had a particular facility for planning in detail, assessing a changing situation, and continually assimilating large quantities of often conflicting data. Facility in this regard appears to be a function of intelligence, experience, and moral courage. As Clausewitz expressed this attribute:

. . .the commander. . .finds himself in a constant whirlpool of false and true information, of mistakes committed through fear, through negligence, through haste; of disregard of his authority, either from mistaken or correct motives, . . . of accidents, which no mortal could have foreseen. In short, he is the victim of a hundred thousand impressions, most of which are intimidating, few of which are encouraging. By long experience in war, one acquires the sensitive perception [necessary] for quickly determining the [true] value of these incidents; high courage and stability of character stand proof against them. . .only an immense force of will. . .can conduct us to our goal.

Successful leaders required aggressiveness, audacity, and vigorous execution from their subordinates, and both they and their soldiers refused to accept defeat. They were ingenious in overcoming obstacles, and in desperate situations, they often took irrational, even foolhardy action to forestall failure. They and their units continued with their mission in spite of casualties, wounds, lost equipment, and shortage of supplies.

The units commanded by successful leaders keyed on the leader and took on the leader's confidence and spirit. This point deserves emphasis, for it is one of the most commonly commented-on features of the study. It is no exaggeration to say that the leader was the most decisive factor in building unit cohesion. Although this process of building unit cohesion took various lengths of time, depending on variables such as individual experience, whether combat was imminent, and how long the members of the unit had been together before the new leader arrived, the leader was the key to the process. Some units in wartime or undergoing intensive and extended field training achieved

such a state in a few months, while some peacetime units who did not train rigorously never achieved it. If the unit were engaged before it had developed the cohesion necessary to function efficiently, even the best and most positive leadership could not overcome the lack of cohesion. In more than one instance, a leader who had previously been successful met failure when he was ordered to lead a unit without cohesion in combat. Conversely, a unit which had attained the cohesion brought by good leadership over a period of time could survive and succeed for a limited time without their leader. A successful leader was able to establish full efficiency in a unit which was already cohesive in a remarkably short period of time.

The characteristics of unsuccessful leaders were, in many respects, the opposite of those of their more successful counterparts. An indecisive leader, particularly one who was "prisoner of his fears" infected his unit and his soldiers were often mentally defeated before being engaged by the enemy. Here, any deficiencies in the will and fortitude of the leader were vividly evident and assumed particular importance; his unit quickly adopted the mental attitude of its leader as well as his confidence or lack thereof.

An unsuccessful leader was often one who waited for orders and did nothing until higher headquarters ordered him to; inaction was the partner of his indecisiveness. Ironically, the leader's indecisiveness had the same effect as if he had made an important and fateful decision: indecisiveness was, in effect, a decision to do nothing. Instead of constantly preparing for the unexpected, he allowed events to take him by surprise. He showed a marked inability to react to changing circumstances, in dramatic contrast to his successful counterpart. Sometimes this shortcoming appeared to be from a lack of intelligence or training, but occasionally the commander appeared to magnify every threat until he was finally paralyzed by the fear produced by an overactive imagination.

It appears that the Army maxim that "the commander is responsible for everything his unit does or fails to do" has usually been quite literally correct in historical terms: the unit has depended on the commander for its spirit, its drive, and its direction. When the commander was decisive, vigorous, and in control, the unit usually succeeded; when he was unsure, inactive, and inept, the unit often faltered.

Character Traits of Successful and Unsuccessful Combat Leaders

Character traits of combat leaders have varied widely, as might be expected, and there was probably no single individual who ever possessed all the "positive" or "negative" traits discussed below. Nonetheless, there has often been a remarkable similarity in characteristics shared by leaders who have been successful in combat. Similarly, unsuccessful combat leaders also shared their own group of character traits.

The sine qua non of almost every successful commander was unquestioned integrity concerning his duties, coupled with a solid ethical foundation in

matters dealing with combat or warfare. His self-image was unfailingly positive and he refused to take counsel of his fears. The good self-image may or may not have translated into an inflated ego; successful leaders can be found with egos of every size. The positive self-image was probably a product of, or at least enhanced by, the individual's physical fitness and good health. Additionally, physical fitness enabled them to overcome fatigue and minor infections which often seemed to plague the unsuccessful commander. There have been successful commanders who were out of shape and there have been ones who were gravely ill, but they have never been the norm.

Successful leaders invariably commanded the unqualified respect of their subordinates and peers. Paradoxically, they did not always command equal respect from their superiors. More than once, an ultimately successful commander was overlooked within an organization because he did not have the reputation with his superiors that he enjoyed with his peers and subordinates.

"Leading by example" almost invariably characterized the "leadership style" of the successful combat commander. He was usually cool under fire, often to a fault--many good commanders have been killed in the line of duty, as dozens of Medal of Honor citations attest. The successful commander seldom showed any indication of inner fears or doubts; often his own memoirs or autobiography make it clear in retrospect that he had second thoughts or worries, but during the action he suppressed them, often consciously. This imperturbability had a substantial steadying effect on the units led by successful commanders, for many of the accounts of the participants in combat actions mention how the soldiers of the unit watched the "old man" for indications that everything was going according to plan--if he showed signs of breaking, the unit often disintegrated quickly. More than once commanders commented on their awareness of this responsibility to maintain a facade of calm through inner doubts, and the force of will required to accomplish it.

As mentioned previously, a successful commander usually refused to admit defeat, and his men followed his lead. Instead of conceding victory to his opponent, he marshalled every skill and resource, often in desperate and unprecedented action to accomplish the unit's mission. Sometimes such action was taken because "there was nothing else I could do," out of desperation. The fact remains that surrender was almost never an option for these commanders; if such a course was taken, it was only in an attempt to save their men after all hope was lost--more often, it was never considered. The tenacious doggedness with which many successful leaders pursued their goals is remarkable; their singlemindedness of purpose is overwhelming.

By contrast, the commander who was unsuccessful in combat appears to have been less intense than his successful counterpart. In a West Point annual, one cadet was described as "indifferent, easy going, happy-go-lucky"; he later lost half his regiment and surrendered the rest without seriously engaging the enemy. Such a leader may have been out of condition or ill (as this example may have been) or he may have been merely moody and indecisive.

He may have lacked the intelligence or "common sense" of his more capable counterpart. Whatever the cause, these unsuccessful leaders imprinted themselves on their units with disastrous results. No case was found where a unit overcame a leader with these characteristics and prevailed; this is not to say that such a case does not exist, but it is not the norm.

Some character traits were found about equally in successful and unsuccessful combat leaders, leading to the conclusion that they are neutral and do not, of themselves, influence success or failure. These are religious feeling and belief, emotional attachment to his soldiers, and a sense of humor. Although at least the first two of these characteristics are usually thought of as "traditional values" of the American officer corps, the degree to which successful and unsuccessful combat leaders tended to be scattered throughout the range of possible temperaments in these areas prevents the conclusion that there is an inherent advantage in any single temperament which guarantees success or failure in combat leadership.

Two special categories of commanders should be mentioned: the first is the "one man show." The leader who runs everything himself, directing all facets of his unit's activities, is not particularly uncommon in history. Often, such a leader could be spectacularly successful over a long period of time; certainly he could imprint his own strong personality on his unit as effectively as any other leader. The most serious drawback to this leadership style, from an institutional standpoint, is that it can create a unit which is paradoxically very capable and at the same time very fragile. That is to say, a unit whose leader insisted on doing everything himself was often a unit which could do little without him physically present and in top form. If he were absent for whatever reason, if he were operating at reduced capability because of illness or fatigue, or if he became a casualty, the unit faltered; in the most spectacular cases it virtually disintegrated.

The second special category of leaders is the "driven man," that is, a leader who was performing for reasons of a different nature than his counterparts. Although both successful and unsuccessful leaders were motivated by a variety of drives, occasionally a leader was found who seemed motivated almost entirely out of a desire for glory, a craving for success, or overweening ambition to the exclusion of all other motivations (such as service, duty, or patriotism). While, like the "one man show," he could enjoy spectacular success on occasion, if his goals were not met or if he were tested beyond his moral strength derived from his limited value system, he was likely to fail.

Experiential Background of Successful and Unsuccessful Combat Leaders

Because the experiences of individuals in military service have varied so widely through time and within in any given period, the differences in the experiences of successful and unsuccessful leaders are less striking than the differences in their character and their institutional development.

Nonetheless, there were enough differences to draw tentative conclusions regarding those experiences which were desirable, one which was undesirable, and several which were neutral in developing successful combat leaders.

The successful combat leader had, by the time he was tested in action, built a solid background of professional judgment in every area of his responsibility. This was true whether he first entered combat as a lieutenant or as a general: he had assimilated the necessary tactical skills and had developed an appreciation for the technology of war in his era for him to function at full potential in his position.

Throughout his career, the successful leader had maintained his physical condition, had preserved his health, and had participated regularly in some sort of physical activity. The nature of the physical activity was not important; during many of the periods examined, merely performing the duties of an active officer was adequate to maintain his condition, as they are in some units today. In most cases, however, the leader resorted to recreational activities to maintain his conditioning--team sports, individual fitness routines, or strenuous pastimes. Some of the benefits of such conditioning have been mentioned previously; among the most important are the sense of well-being and enhanced self-image it gave the officer, his greater tolerance of fatigue, and his greater capacity to undertake strenuous field duty.

Finally, a pattern of being able to adapt to changing circumstances had developed in the successful leader by the time he was tested in combat. This was probably a function of varied assignments throughout his career, but not all officers possessed this ability; unsuccessful leaders were less adaptable. A leader's adaptability was likely to receive its greatest test in decision-making under the pressures of combat. When his unit was being engaged, casualties were mounting, and the "fog of war" made everything unsure, the unadaptable leader more than once went into a funk and the command function fell by default to a subordinate. If there was no subordinate equal to the task, disaster ensued.

The only significant shortcoming found in those leaders who were unsuccessful in combat which could be, at least in part traced to their experiences, was that they had poor tactical competence. They did not seem, as a group, as able to deal with the complex details of tactics as well as their successful counterparts--terrain analysis and organization for combat seemed to be particular shortfalls.

Several experiences were found to be present about equally in the backgrounds of both successful and unsuccessful leaders, and they are therefore considered to be neutral. Pre-service social class, area of the country in which reared, ethnic group, formal education, and athletic ability (as opposed to participation) were not discriminators between the groups.

Surprisingly, prior combat experience was not an important factor in whether or not a leader was successful. Although a leader who had prior

combat experience was likely to do well in later combat, all did not. There were enough instances in which a combat-experienced leader later failed that it was not considered a significant discriminator.

Likewise, the relative age of successful and unsuccessful combat leaders was not a discriminator, with one important caveat. Probably because younger leaders are more likely to be engaged in combat than older ones, the prime age for combat leaders appeared to be under thirty-five, while the minimum age is probably the late teens. Successful combat leaders were more likely to be found within this range of ages. Successful combat leaders were found past age sixty, but unsuccessful leaders tended to be older rather than younger. Young leaders (under thirty-five) were found who were successful at all combat leadership positions through division command level.

Institutional Development of Successful and Unsuccessful Combat Leaders

To assess the effect of the system which managed the careers of combat leaders in history, the study committee tried to determine what the analogue to the current OPMS was in the given historical period in which they performed, and then to see how that system groomed the developing leader for his responsibilities in combat. Often such a system was only rudimentary, amounting to little more than word of mouth--the "old boy network." Nonetheless, the committee attempted to determine what sort of formal and informal military education the leader had received, what assignments and duties he had had, at what levels he had commanded and in what geographic area, whether he had spent unusually short or long periods in any particular grade, and whether he had any mentor of high rank looking out for his welfare.

Successful combat leaders tended to seek duty with troops while some of their less successful counterparts tended to avoid such duty. Obviously, such avoidance could not always be determined, as a leader in the past would probably not advertise an avoidance of "troop duty" any more than an otherwise successful officer would today; however, it occurred often enough to be worthy of note.

Successful combat leaders often had been assigned as instructors in service schools or academies, particularly in such areas as tactics, leadership, or technical branch skills. Whether before or after the leader had initially experienced combat, the instructor duty appeared to improve his capabilities.

A succession of different short assignments of less than one year in a given job was a recurring event in the files of unsuccessful combat leaders. Whether this occurred because of the individual's inefficiency or as a result of "needs of the service" could not be determined.

Several factors traditionally used as personnel management tools and as indicators of quality in officers were found about equally in the records of successful and unsuccessful officers. These include class standing at service

academies and branch schools a variety of assignments differing in character, performance in high-level staff assignments and such "high-visibility" assignments as aide-de-camp, and below the-zone promotions. An unmeasurable variable, of course, is that both successful and unsuccessful leaders may have been given the position of leadership in which they succeeded or failed as a result of service in one of these important positions.

Variations in Time and Cultures

Although only a few foreign officers (from Great Britain, Israel, and Germany) were studied in depth (no unsuccessful foreign combat leaders were studied), some tentative conclusions can be drawn concerning differences in successful leaders in each of those countries compared to successful American combat leaders.

Each of the successful foreign combat leaders tended to have more time in tactical units than his "typical" American counterpart. British and Israeli leaders tended to have spent more time in a single unit than almost any American studied. All three countries had a "lead from the front" style of leadership which was often, but not always a feature of successful American combat leadership. All three countries had extremely cohesive tactical units, to a degree seldom found in American units studied, with the exception of units which had been engaged in combat for some time.

At the inception of the study, the committee expected to find successful combat leadership styles evolving from generation to generation. This expectation proved false: American combat leaders have led soldiers in a remarkably consistent way throughout the two centuries of the study. Although there are a variety of different leadership styles exhibited among the Americans examined, they follow a common central thread that has changed little in the history of the U.S. Army. Put another way, a successful combat leader could be found in Vietnam who used a leadership style shared by his forebears in the American Civil War or World War I.

Implications for OPMS

In general, the current study verifies "conventional wisdom." That is, most of the findings appear to agree with present doctrinal concepts in leadership and personnel management, with minor exceptions. Once again, it should be stressed that these conclusions apply only to combat leadership and that they were drawn without regard to other military tasks.

Important conclusions include the following:

- o Some individuals appear to be "born leaders," while other individuals can be developed into leaders, but a solid foundation of "character" is essential in any successful leader. That is, there appears to be an aggregate of qualities in an individual's makeup, particularly those concerning his integrity and ethical foundation which are absolutely essential in the potential leader, and which cannot be added through schooling or experience.

7
E
f

TAB A
STUDY METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

STUDY METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

Survey Goal: : Analyze successful and unsuccessful combat actions to determine whether there are common characteristics in either group of incidents. Identify personality, character, and behavior traits of combat leaders through history by examining salient characteristics of individual leaders who proved successful or unsuccessful in combat. Perform research on the backgrounds of the leaders to identify experiences which shaped their character and try to determine how the personnel management system of their period helped or hindered their development. (The concept of consultant project is at Inclosure 1.)

Survey Scope: Examples of combat leadership throughout recorded history were collected and examined; however, the focus of the study was on the U.S. military experience since 1847.

Committee Composition: The survey committee was composed of seven officers in the Military History Division of the Department of History of the United States Military Academy. Biographical sketches of the committee members are at Inclosure 2.

Study Methodology: Initially, all instructors assigned to the Department of History, USMA, were solicited to submit examples of successful or unsuccessful combat leadership at division level or below throughout history. Examples of combat leadership by officers at higher level than division command were included only where the individual was performing a task normally performed by an individual of lower grade. Over two hundred examples were collected.

The collected examples were screened by at least five committee members who voted for retention or rejection of the example on an annotated cover sheet (Inclosure 3). During this screening, each committee member attempted to determine what caused the success or failure of the individual action and what "characterized" the action--whether such factors as the leader's heroism, doggedness, technical or tactical proficiency, or the unit's cohesion or esprit contributed to success or failure in the action.

At this point, combat actions in which the leader did not appear to be a factor were automatically rejected unless it was evident that cohesion, esprit, or other qualities for which he was properly responsible were present and contributed to the degree of success of the action.

During this review, each committee member annotated on the cover sheet suggestions for further research on the leader and the action such as biographies, official histories, archival research, the Cullum Register of West Point graduates, or personnel files.

At the completion of the initial screening, the examples which were retained were assigned to individual committee members for in-depth research on the example. During this research, other accounts of the combat action

TAB A

were sought, as well as background information on the leader. To assist in standardization of research, a second worksheet was devised (Inclosure 4). This worksheet ensured that all committee members would be looking for the same sorts of information on their assigned combat leaders. Over eighty examples of combat leadership were researched in this way.

Examples of combat leadership in foreign armies were examined, but the study was usually less rigorous than that in the case of American leaders for two reasons: first, detailed information on the backgrounds of foreign leaders was ordinarily less available than that for Americans, with the obvious exception of historical figures such as Erwin Rommel and Moshe Dayan; second, the committee suggests caution in extrapolating from characteristics of combat leadership in societies which are saliently different from that of the United States.

Study Limitations: Personnel records were of critical importance to the study, yet except in a few cases, they proved to be unavailable. Personnel files of U.S. soldiers who left the service prior to 1917 are held in the National Archives in Washington, while records of soldiers who left since that time are held at the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) at St. Louis, Missouri. Research on officers who attained General Officer rank prior to 1917 proved to be fairly complete when research was conducted at the National Archives. A serious gap in the files of later officers exists, however, since a fire at the NPRC in 1973 destroyed all records of individuals who left the service between 1917 and December 1959. Thus a void exists for all veterans of World War I, most veterans of World War II, and many veterans of the Korean War. Detailed study on the backgrounds of most of the individuals of these periods was therefore limited to more famous historical figures.

A particular problem arose in studying the combat leadership of the Vietnam War. As discussed in the examples of combat from that war, there are far fewer reliable historical accounts of leadership at the levels focused on in this study than exist for other American wars. In attempting to overcome this limitation, the committee initiated a proposal to conduct research in the personnel files of the active duty holders of the Medal of Honor. A check of their citations for the award showed that their actions had inevitably involved "leadership" (as opposed to isolated heroic acts) and, of course, their personnel files were available at MILPERCEN. Approval to access these files could not be obtained for purposes of this study, but such research would be worthwhile as a later adjunct to this study.

Finally, the reliability of the study must be addressed. The study does not purport to be "scientific" in that it used neither rigorous behavioral science methodology nor statistical analysis. Put another way, whatever reliability the study may possess is a function of the accounts of combat leadership it researched; a different group of accounts could conceivably come up with a different group of conclusions.

Nonetheless, the range of examples studied and the often striking similarity of characteristics of successful actions (and the equally striking similarity of unsuccessful actions) suggests a high degree of validity. The observations and conclusions of the study concerning combat leadership, while necessarily tentative, are supported by historical evidence and may be useful to those charged with designing the program of officer development for the United States Army.

TAB A

3



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR PERSONNEL
WASHINGTON, DC 20315

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DAPE-MP-OPMS

20 DEC 1983

SUBJECT: Concept of Consultant Project

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

1. The review of OPMS needs to reflect on the lessons of history as we revise the system to meet present and future requirements.
2. Specifically: We need to identify historical examples and trends that reflect unusual success in combat (leaders and units) which can help lead the Army to inculcating those traits, factors, education and training in all our leaders.
3. The OPMS Study Group would like your analysis of those factors in officers throughout the military (ground combat) history which have consistently led to unusual combat success at the Platoon, Company, Battalion, Brigade and/or Division level (focus above the division is not necessary). All Armies should be considered - not just the US Army or Allied Forces. The focus should be on officer leadership (vice management) in combat. Look for successes against great odds or in circumstances where leadership overcame great disadvantages of enemy, terrain, weather, or troops available. Combat Arms, Combat Support and Combat Service Support leaders and units should be examined with the focus on actual combat situations.
4. A written analysis and a verbal discussion which identifies those factors to the OPMS Study Group is the desired product.

WARD M. LeHARDY
Colonel, GS
Director, OPMS Study Group

INCL 1 TO TAB A

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

HAMBURGER, KENNETH E. Lieutenant Colonel, Field Artillery; Associate Professor, Military History; Oklahoma State University '68.

Military Experience: Field Artillery Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, Ft Sill; Command and General Staff College, Ft Leavenworth; Fixed Wing and Rotary Wing Flight School, Ft Rucker. Forward Observer, Bn Adjutant (Ft Bragg) 64-66; Assault Helicopter Plt Ldr (Vietnam) 67-68; Opns Officer (Ft Bragg) 69; Recon Airplane Co CO, Bn S3 (Vietnam) 71; FA Bn S-3 and XO 73-76; Attack Helicopter Trp CO (Germany) 76-68; FA Bn CO (Korea) 80-81.

Academic Experience: MA in Military History, Duke University '80.

BONIN, JOHN A. Major, Infantry; Instructor, Military History; USMA '72.

Military Experience: Infantry Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, Airborne and Ranger School, Ft Benning; Supply Management Officers' Course, Ft Lee, VA; Airmobile Inf and Spt Plt Ldr (Ft Hood) 73-75; Mechanized Rifle Co and Bde HHC XO, 75-76; Division Asst G-3 and G-1, 78-79, Mechanized Rifle Co CO (Germany) 79-80.

Academic Experience: MA in Military History, Duke University '82.

HENDRIX, THOMAS L. Major, Infantry; Assistant Professor, Military History; USMA '72.

Military Experience: Infantry Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, Airborne and Ranger Courses, Ft Benning; Jumpmaster, Germany. Abn/Mech Inf Plt Ldr (Germany) 73; Inf and Mortar Plt Ldr, Asst S-1, Co XO, S-3 Liaison Officer, S-3 (Air) (Italy) 73-77; Co CO and Chief, Cadre Training Center (Ft Benning) 78-80.

Academic Experience: MA in Military History, Stanford University '82.

HERBERT, PAUL H. Major, Infantry; Assistant Professor, Military History; USMA '72.

Military Experience: Infantry Basic and Advanced Courses, Ft Benning; Airborne, Ranger, Jumpmaster, Air Assault Courses. Inf Plt Ldr, Spt Plt Ldr, Bn S-4 (Ft Campbell) 73-75; Bn S-4, Co CO (Korea) 75-76; Bn S-3 (Air), Co CO, Bn S-1 (Germany) 77-80.

Academic Experience: MA in Military History, Ohio State University '82.

JAGGER, DONOVAN F. Major, Infantry; Instructor, Military History; USMA '70.

Military Experience: Infantry Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, Airborne and Ranger Courses, Ft Benning; Naval Command and Staff College, Newport, RI. Rifle/Wpns Plt Ldr, Bn Adj, Bn S-3 (Air), Bn S-4, Heavy Mortar Plt Ldr (Germany) 71-74; Bn S-3 (Air), Bn S-3, Mech Co CO, Asst G-3 (Kansas/Germany) 75-78.

Academic Experience: MA in Military History, Stanford University '80.

Inclosure 2 to TAB A

20

BETSON, WILLIAM R. Captain, Armor; Assistant Professor; USMA '74.
Military Experience: Armor Officer Basic Course, Airborne, Ranger Schools, Infantry Officer Advanced Course; Tank Bn Spt Plt Ldr, Scout Plt Ldr (Ft Carson) 75-76; Scout Plt Ldr, Co XO, Co CO (Germany) 76-79.
Academic Experience: MA in American History, University of Pennsylvania '82.

EPLEY, WILLIAM W. Captain, Infantry; Assistant Professor; USMA '73.
Military Experience: Infantry Officer Basic Course, Mortar Platoon School, Airborne and Ranger Schools, Ft Benning; Jumpmaster School, Ft Bragg; Armor Officer Advanced Course, Motor Officer Course, Ft Knox. Plt Ldr, Asst S-4, Co XO, Rifle Co CO (Ft Bragg) 73-78.
Academic Experience: MA in European History, University of Michigan '81.

OPMS LEADERSHIP STUDY

INITIAL COMMENT SHEET

Each member comment in each block; initial your comments.

NAME OF LEADER

CHARACTERISTICS OF ACTION:

COMMENTS:

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH: Be specific as possible

ASSESSMENT OF WORTH TO STUDY (5 High - 0 Low):

/ / / / / / / /

Incl 3 to TAB A

OPMS LEADERSHIP STUDY

Checklist for Completing Background Research Worksheet

Items not mentioned below are self-explanatory. Under each entry include as many of the listed items as possible; use intuition as appropriate but indicate when offering inferences rather than facts from the documents.

FAMILY DATA: Region of upbringing; ethnic group; immigration history; parental occupation; rural/urban background; sibling order; marriage data.

EDUCATION: Civil, years completed; college, major, year of graduation. Military, list schools, years. Note independent indications of intelligence (e.g., OERs, friends' observations, etc.).

MORAL/ETHICAL COURAGE: Religion, degree of commitment; "ethical tests" in civil or military life; observations of friends, superiors.

EXPERIENCE: Civil: Avocations, vocations, travels. Military: TIS; assignments/duties; TIG at earlier grades; teaching experience/subject; commands; source of commission.

PERSONALITY TRAITS: Include pre-military observations and look for changes with age/TIS.

PHYSICAL CONDITION: Sports, avocations; wounds, physical/psychiatric profiles.

POST-INCIDENT BIO: Short resume of subsequent career, military and non-military.

Put bibliographic data under notes/comments for follow-up.

Incl 4 to TAB A

OPMS LEADERSHIP STUDY

BACKGROUND RESEARCH WORKSHEET

NAME :

SVC NO/SSAN :

DOB :

DATE OF INCIDENT :

AGE AT INCIDENT :

RANK/DOR AT INCIDENT :

FAMILY DATA :

EDUCATION :

MORAL/ETHICAL COURAGE :

EXPERIENCE :

PERSONALITY TRAITS :

COMBAT EXPERIENCE :

PHYSICAL CONDITION :

POST-INCIDENT BIO :

NOTES/COMMENTS :

Appendix A to Incl 4 to TAB A

TAB B

HISTORICAL EXAMPLES OF COMBAT LEADERSHIP

HISTORICAL EXAMPLES OF COMBAT LEADERSHIP

The guiding principles in selecting and editing the examples which follow were that they should be both interesting and relevant and that they should describe incidents in combat or, in the case of non-combat incidents, should directly relate to preparing a unit to engage in combat. In presenting them, the editor has attempted to put the incident in context, but to let the leadership skills (or, in some cases, the lack thereof) speak for themselves instead of instructing the reader to look for traits that should be obvious after having read the essay on combat leadership in history.

For the reader who would like to pursue an incident or leader further, bibliographic citations are provided; for details of publication, see the bibliography following the examples. Although some are out of print, they should be available in many libraries.

TAB B

PONTIAC'S REBELLION

With the victory of the British in the French and Indian War, new settlers began to move into the Indian lands of what is now Pennsylvania and western New York. Pontiac, chief of the Ottawas, led a rebellion of the northwest tribes and attacked British forts throughout the area. In the first week of August, 1763, Colonel Henri Bouquet, the Swiss-born commander of one of the battalions of the Royal American Regiment, led a relief expedition of about five hundred men from Carlisle to Fort Pitt. In addition to his own men, he had some soldiers of the Black Watch (referred to as the Highlanders in this excerpt).

About twenty miles from Fort Pitt, at the little stream of Bushy Run, the force was ambushed. Although Bouquet had expected any attack somewhere along the route and made plans for clearing any ambush, the attempt to move on from the initial contact was unsuccessful. The narrative begins as Bouquet is being forced to fall back to save his convoy.

The essence of the Indian style of attack upon regular soldiers in the wilderness, which had always before succeeded, was to remain hidden, except for intermittent leaps and capers to disconcert the already distracted soldiers. Crawling, slipping from tree to tree, taking as much advantage of the forest's cover as might so many wild animals, they kept pressing closer so that their continual aimed rifle fire became each moment more effective. The soldiers, refused permission to break ranks or, if they were given permission, too inexperienced to take equivalent cover, were committed to standing in the open where they remained targets for a fire which they were helpless adequately to return. If charged, the Indians melted away only to begin encircling the advancing detachment which had immediately to fall back again. The Indian's wild howling suggested the fate in store for the vanquished. Their near invisibility made them seem invulnerable. When an Indian was momentarily glimpsed, his naked form painted red and black, perhaps with grotesque white or green circles about his eyes and mouth, he appeared more akin to a demon from the nether regions than a human antagonist. This form of Indian attack in the dense thickets of the wilderness, by now horribly familiar, had been one with which a regular army had until now been quite unable to cope. It was inevitable that a premonition of doom began soon to settle over the frantic soldiers. Suffering punishment which could not be returned became a strain which they could not indefinitely endure. Sooner or later came the dread moment when one man and then his neighbor and then the next three or four and then a whole platoon yielded to the impulse to run, each imagining that in the confusion there might be some vague desperate chance that he might save himself.

The supreme tribute to any commander is his influence over his men at such a moment. Bouquet's did not waver. They looked only to him, waited for him to determine what to do, steadily did what he

directed. Near the spot where the convoy had been attacked the road ran up over the shoulder of a low hill. He ordered the hill seized. The cattle and horses of the convoy were tethered to trees on the upper slopes. The wounded were collected in a slight depression near the top and further sheltered by a bulwark of grain bags. Those of his men still fit for action he arranged in a perimeter about the lower slopes of the hill, each facing outward from the circle toward the enemy. He was establishing the forerunner of the thin red line famous in England's later wars.

The Indians pressed their attack. They now had their prey driven to cover and completely surrounded and were more than ever confident of the outcome. Though the soldiers had been permitted to take cover in hollows or behind logs it was still an unequal contest. Soldiers were being killed, hour after hour, while the Indian losses were insignificant.

When darkness fell the Indians slackened fire, to conserve ammunition, but continued closely to invest the hill. The long night was made to seem longer by their howls, and taunts, and the shouted forecasts by one Indian who knew English of the fate the morrow must inevitably bring to every white man. Bouquet needed no Indian reminders of his peril. He had staved off destruction during the first day of battle but his situation remained one that could hardly have been less encouraging. His small army had already lost 60 killed and wounded. He could only assume that the next day, as his line grew weaker, his rate of loss was more likely to increase than diminish and his army steadily wither away. To attempt to hold this position was in any event impossible for there was no water on the hill. Yet to attempt to break out and fight his way through the forest back to Fort Ligonier was to admit defeat and invite catastrophe. It was difficult to imagine that on that long road back over Chestnut Mountain there might arise a better chance to beat them than he had had when they first attacked him. There remained, then, but the one recourse. Some way must be hit upon to beat them here. His men held their lines in the darkness and trusted that he would think of something. The wounded, listening through the night to the Indian clamor, could only wait and shudder. Their prospects for tomorrow were as dreadful as any men could contemplate. If the army marched they must be left behind. If it stood here until overwhelmed Indian torment must as surely be their lot. Indians occasionally made captives of the strong but took invariable delight in adding to the suffering of the helpless.

When morning brought enough new light to aim, the Indian fire recommenced. More confident every hour of the certainty of victory they pressed their attack with fresh ardor. The day was excessively hot and the lack of water on the hill became a major factor in the battle. The English, especially the wounded, were suffering agonies of thirst. The incessant Indian fire struck also among the animals. Wounded horses

broke from their tethers and galloped, screaming terribly, up and down the wooded slopes. From time to time, to the Indians' great glee, they disordered the English line by trampling the recumbent soldiers.

Bouquet had been coolly waiting for the opportune moment to make his bid. Toward noon he made it. His maneuver was the simplest and most time-honored of all tactical stratagems---the feigned retreat. By taking a precisely calculated advantage of the terrain and the mood of his enemy he made of it a gem of generalship. At his direction, the men of the company holding the south side of the hill slope began to give way. Soon more and more of them were getting up and running. The overconfident Indians, already awaiting and expecting the first signs of English panic, rushed forward, yelling exultantly, to spur the flight into a rout. The company on the west slope, hidden from Indian view by the contour of the ground, advanced suddenly around the hill to take them in the flank. The Highlanders charged, for once enjoying the unprecedented satisfaction of getting at a mass of Indians with the bayonet. The astonished Indians recoiled. The company from the east slope, its sudden advance likewise concealed by a shoulder of the hill, now took them in the other flank. The Indians broke and were driven in headlong flight by the now jubilant Highlanders.

The counterattack had been so totally unexpected, its success so complete, and their losses so heavy, that the entire Indian force broke off the action. They had been convinced that Bouquet's men, far from having been dispirited, were more ready to keep on fighting than they had been the first day. It was a basic principle of Indian military thinking that an attack should be pushed only when there appeared a clear promise of demoralizing the defense. The victors, after burying their dead, resumed their advance, though not triumphantly. Having lost his horses, Bouquet was obliged to destroy most of his supplies. Slowed by the need to carry so many wounded in litters and by sporadic Indian sniping, he was three days making it the rest of the way to Fort Pitt. Ecuyer's welcome was made the more heartfelt by his recent misgivings. After the first day of the battle Indians had appeared outside the walls brandishing scalps and announcing the destruction of the English army.

At Bushy Run, the matching of red warrior against white soldier was more nearly even, longer in duration, and more gallantly and stubbornly fought than in any other battle in which they ever met. In every other the weakness of the loser early became apparent, the victor correspondingly encouraged, and the engagement soon degenerated into pursuit or debacle. But at Bushy Run for hour after hour, through two days and a night, the antagonists stood toe to toe, each accepting and inflicting punishment without flinching. The two forces were about equal. The English lost 115 killed and wounded, a quarter of their

number. The Indians lost approximately as many. Though a minor battle if judged by the numbers engaged, it was as desperately waged an action as is often recorded in military annals.

(From Dale van Every, Forth to the Wilderness: The First American Frontier, pp. 180-184.)

Pontiac ended his rebellion less than four months later, fighting no other important actions.

THE WAR OF 1812

During the War of 1812, a great worry of the Americans was an invasion of the British from Canada. Both Navies had been building fleets near Lake Champlain. By the time of the battle, the fleets were of equal size, with a slight advantage to the Americans in range. The battle occurred on 11 September 1813, with Lieutenant Thomas Macdonough commanding the American fleet. Macdonough was thirty-one years old; he had entered the navy as a midshipman at seventeen and had seen action in Tripoli, helping Stephen Decatur in his daring destruction of the Philadelphia in 1804.

Macdonough's intelligence service had given him quite accurate information about the enemy, and he was determined to fight at anchor. C.S. Forester said that the American profited from his study of the ways by which Nelson had beaten anchored fleets on the Nile and at Copenhagen. Macdonough chose a position about 2 miles from the mainland, out of reach of the shore batteries if these latter should fall into British hands. He placed Preble just beyond shoal water off the north end of Crab Island, stern to the island; then Ticonderoga 200 yards northward, stern to Preble's bow; then at another 100 yards Saratoga; and at the point Eagle. Forming a second line 40 yards westward, the gunboats filled the intervals between the front-line ships. When his flotilla was in position, Macdonough put out kedge anchors off the sides of the bows of each of the first-line ships, with the hawsers underwater. Now he could, if he needed to, wind his ships around to retire the starboard broadsides and present the larboard. Finally he picked his anchorage so that the English ships would have to round Cumberland Head and then beat upwind to reach the Americans. Since there was no room for them to anchor broadside out of American carronade range, the British could not utilize their advantage in long guns.

Downie was unable to make his approach on 10 September because the winds were adverse, but he sailed from Chazy at 3:30 A.M. on 11 September to keep his rendezvous. He thought Prevost had agreed that when the naval signal guns were fired, the army would start the land battle. Between 7:30 and 8:30 A.M. the flotilla rounded Cumberland Head, with the wind in the northwest, shifted from line ahead to line abreast, and steered for the American line. Downie now fired his signal guns. At this time a large part of the army was cooking breakfast and continued to do so. General Robinson's brigade, it is true, was in motion under orders from Prevost to march three miles upstream, cross the fords, and assail the American flank. But Robinson had been told not to attack before ten o'clock.

Downie's plan was for Chubb, Linnet, and Confiance to concentrate their force on Eagle, eliminate her, and then turn their full power upon Saratoga. The gunboats would help Finch fight Preble and Ticonderoga.

His principal reliance was placed on the new, but not well prepared, flagship Confiance, far more powerful than any other vessel present. But while the British ships tacked in bows on, they took severe punishment from the American long guns. Macdonough himself sighted the first guns, and the shot carried from bow to stern through Confiance, wreaking destruction. When finally they got into position opposite the American line, however, the British anchored their ships and with perfect discipline under heavy fire swung them around until their broadsides bore. Captain Downie ordered his gunners to take careful aim, and the full larboard broadside of Confiance smashed into Saratoga, killing or wounding 40 members of the crew. The blast broke open chicken coops on Saratoga's deck. One rooster flew up to light on a gun, there flapped his wings, and crowed. The American crew took this to be a most favorable omen; the members regained their composure and fell to work. No later rounds by the British were as effective as the first one. Mostly they were too high and did no more than cut up the rigging.

During the first fifteen minutes of the battle an American round shot knocked a British gun from its carriage into Captain Downie at the groin, and without even breaking the skin the blow killed him instantly. For the first half-hour Chubb and Linnet closely engaged Eagle as planned. Then Chubb went out of control, drifted through the center of the American line, approached the western shore, and there had to surrender. Her commander was later charged with bad conduct, but he was cleared when the testimony revealed that his vessel had become unmanageable, that he himself was wounded, and that only 6 of his men were left on deck. Soon after Chubb's surrender, Eagle cut her cables and took position between Saratoga and Ticonderoga. The brig took a southerly heading, brought her larboard broadside into the battle, and wrought damage upon Confiance. At about the same time Preble was disabled and drifted off westward before the wind. While Finch engaged Ticonderoga, 4 of the British gunboats moved in upon the latter's stern. But Captain Stephen Cassin and his crew gallantly put out a fire and kept Ticonderoga in action.

At mid-point of the battle it seemed as if the end had come for the American flotilla. Macdonough himself was once knocked down by the head of Midshipman Bellamy, torn off by a round shot, and was again knocked down by flying debris. Then all of Saratoga's starboard battery was silenced by enemy shot. Now Macdonough diverted all his attention to winding his ship around until her larboard battery was able to bear. Lieutenant James Robertson, commanding Confiance after Downie's fall, ordered the same maneuver, but without the sort of advanced preparation Macdonough had seen to. Confiance's lines fouled when the ship was stern to Saratoga, and she took such severe punishment--at least so Robertson reported--that the crews refused to stand to their battle stations. Thus, about ten-thirty in the morning Confiance struck her colors. Now the fresh broadsides of Saratoga and Eagle converged on

Linnet and soon forced her surrender too. Finch went out of control and drifted into the shoals on the north side of Crab Island. Several of the British gunboats now fled; they seemed to hang back from the battle all along.

By 10:30 A.M. this lake battle--tiny but one of the most decisive in American history--was finished. No more than 1,800 men were involved in it, around one-tenth of the number in the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. The American dead totaled 47, the British 57; the American wounded were 58, the British at least 100. It was an overall casualty rate of about 14 per cent. The numbers were insignificant, but the consequences were tremendous.

(From John K. Mahon, The War of 1812, pp. 323-325.)

The battle was probably the decisive engagement of the war, ending any hope of the British for a successful invasion from Canada.

AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

Examples of successful and unsuccessful leadership in the American Civil War abound; the difficulty is in selecting the best. One of the ubiquitous characteristics of leadership of the period is its theatrically heroic quality, probably in part a reflection of the romantic character of the time. Whether it served a purpose is sometimes debatable; undoubtedly it killed a good many potentially successful leaders before they had an opportunity to prove themselves.

One example of the dramatic disregard (possibly contempt would be a better word) for danger is that of Captain James Hall at the battle of Fredericksburg, 13 December 1862. Although the Confederates were dug in (or behind the stone wall in their famous 'sunken road'), entrenchments or breastworks were not the rule in the armies until after the battle. The Union infantry was in the open.

Holding still to be shelled is about as unpleasant a job as infantry gets, and the Yankees in the open plain found it especially hard because they could very easily see the cannoners who were firing at them. Naturally, they hated them; one soldier wrote that the Rebel gunners, visibly busy around their pieces, looked "like fiends who stirred infernal fires." An indignant general routed one straggler out of a ditch and ordered him to rejoin his command. The straggler saluted and said: "General, I will, jest as soon as them fellers quit throwin' railroad iron at us." And back on the far side of the Rappahannock the chaplain of a Pennsylvania regiment, returning to camp with some wounded men, told the contraband cook of the regimental officers' mess to take some hot coffee over to the embattled regiment. The contraband, looking wide-eyed at the flashing shells that were exploding all over the plain, shook his head emphatically. "I'se not gwine up dar whar so many big stars are busting!"

It was at times like this that the Civil War officer was supposed to display a dramatic disregard of danger. To keep his troops steady he had to expose his own person; he had to do it with an air, as if to show that he simply was not aware that there was any danger. The boys of the 16th Maine, growing restive under the cannonade, presently found themselves gaping at Captain James Hall who had his 2nd Maine battery drawn up in action beside them and who was blithely sitting his horse, carrying on a conversation with the 16th's commander, Lieutenant Colonel Charles W. Tilden, and the brigadier, Colonel Adrian Root, who were on their horses a dozen yards away from him. Since the air was full of truly deafening noise, the three officers had to shout at the top of their lungs to make themselves heard, but aside from that they might have been three civilian horsemen who had met on a bridle path in a park on a pleasant May morning and were stopping to pass the time of day.

While the soldiers hugged the ground and watched admiringly, a Rebel shell came whistling in between Captain Hall and the two colonels, narrowly missing the colonels and going on to crash into a caisson in the rear, exploding it with an earth-rocking crash. Captain Hall looked faintly annoyed. Very deliberately he dismounted, walked over to one of his guns, and painstakingly sighted it at the Rebel battery which had fired the shot. Satisfied, he stepped back and waved his hand to the gun crew. The gun was fired and landed a direct hit, dismounting a Rebel gun amid a cloud of torn earth and flying splinters. The battery commander walked back to his horse, mounted, and resumed the interrupted conversation as if nothing had happened.

(From Bruce Catton, Glory Road, pp. 44ff.)

The effectiveness of Hall's action cannot be assessed; probably it had little other than possibly inspiring some of the infantry by his example.

* * * * *

Dramatic disregard of danger is one of the more striking examples of 'leading by example,' a leadership characteristics which will be explored throughout these citations. An instance of 'leading by example' which produced more tangible results than that of Captain Hall was that of General Phil Sheridan at the Battle of Cedar Creek on 19 October 1864. The battle took place at the end of General Jubal Early's Shenandoah Valley Campaign, when Sheridan's devastation of the Valley was at its height. Sheridan was thirty-three years old; Early was forty-eight.

Actually, the situation was highly unstable, principally because the destroying Yankee host had done its job so thoroughly. Early had perhaps 15,000 men with him, and the one thing these men could not do was stay where they were. The Valley had been so completely devastated that they could get no supplies of any kind from the surrounding country. Every mouthful of food for man and beast had to come up by wagon train, via Staunton and Waynesboro, and it was a hard pull for the worn-out Confederate transportation system. Early could either leave the Valley altogether, ceding the whole territory to the Yankees for the rest of the war--or he could attack.

To attack an army whose combat strength was twice his own would be, of course, to take fantastic risks. But the Confederate situation was desperate, and if fantastic risks were not taken the war was as good as lost. Early appears to have figured that Sheridan's force was not quite as solid as it looked anyway. The VI Corps was very good, but Confederate intelligence put a much lower estimate on the other two corps. Also, a good part of Sheridan's strength was in his cavalry, which did not ordinarily cut much of a figure in an infantry battle. Altogether, the odds could be worse.

In addition, there were two other encouraging factors. One was the obvious fact that nobody on the Federal side had any notion that the Confederates might take the offensive. The other was the position of the Union army.

Cedar Creek came down from the northwest to join the north fork of the Shenandoah River, and the chain of hills just behind the creek, on which the Federals were camped, ran from northwest to southeast. The VI Corps was on the Federal right, roughly a mile from where the Valley Pike crossed the creek and climbed through the higher ground. Next to it, north and west of the pike, was the XIX Corps. Southeast of the turnpike, anchoring the Union left, was Crook's corps. It was in a good position to knock down any force which tried to come up along the main highway, but there was open ground nearly a mile wide between its own left and the point where creek and river met. Since the river just there lay in what looked like an impassable gorge, it seemed unlikely that the Confederates would be able to get across and make any trouble for this exposed flank.

Unlikely, except to soldiers who had to take fantastic risks anyway--the desperate, fifty-to-one sort of gamble that led Washington to take his army across the Delaware to attack the Hessian camp at Trenton. To Jubal Early the exposed Federal left looked like opportunity. He studied the ground carefully, and it seemed that an army corps could be led along that impassable gorge if the man who led it was thoroughly familiar with the layout and did not mind marching his entire command within 400 yards of the Yankee picket line.

To lessen the risk, Early sent his cavalry and part of his infantry over to the west, thrusting them forward as if he planned to attack the Yankee right flank. He put some more men in place where Wright's and Emory's men could see them, and he organized a third column to stand by for an advance directly along the turnpike. Then, with everything ready, he had General John B. Gordon take his army corps down into the gorge to get in behind the Federal left and open the attack. It meant an all-night hike, much of it in single file, and the men left canteens, cooking utensils, and everything except weapons and ammunition in camp so that no rattling or clanking of equipment would give them away.

So the army moved. Very early on the shivery, misty dawn of October 19, with fog hanging in the low places and the darkness lying thick in the graveyard hour between moonset and dawn, the Confederates rose up out of the gorge and came in yelling and shooting on the drowsy flank of Sheridan's army.

The day before, certain election commissioners from Connecticut had come into the Yankee lines to take the presidential vote of Connecticut soldiers, and they remained in camp overnight as special headquarters guests. They liked what they saw of army life, and to their hosts at supper they expressed regret that they could not see a fight before they went home. The officers who were entertaining them said they would like to accommodate them, but there just wasn't a chance: "it seemed very certain that Early would keep a respectful distance."

So here before reveille there was a popping and a racket off at the extreme left, and while nobody imagined it was anything except some little picket-line tussle there was a general stir in the Union camp, and the veterans began to cook breakfast on the theory that whether this was a false alarm or the real thing it would do no harm to eat and be ready. Then, suddenly, artillery began to pound, the infantry firing became sustained and intense, and a wild uproar came through the dark mist--and the election commissioners quickly found their clothes and ballot boxes and horses and took off for the North just as fast as they could go.

Crook's corps was crumpled up in a twinkling, with Rebels coming in from the left and rear before the men even had time to grab their muskets. The corps had seven guns in line, and these were captured before they could fire a shot--to be spun about immediately by their captors and fired through the confusing mist into the middle of the Yankee camp. Crook commanded about 7,000 infantry that day, and in a matter of minutes those who had not been shot or captured were running for the rear, all 7,000 of them. For the next twenty-four hours, that corps did not exist as a usable military instrument.

Almost before the rest of the army realized that an attack was being made, Confederate Gordon had his infantry on the hill where Sheridan's headquarters had been--which meant that he was in rear of the entire army and that the men of Emory's and Wright's corps, who had as yet seen no Rebels, could do nothing on earth except retreat as speedily as possible. The surprise could not have been more complete.

General Wright came up from his own quarters, working to get troops over to the Valley Pike and check the rout. One of the men who went with him wrote that nothing was left of Crook's corps except "a disorganized, routed, demoralized, terrified mob of fugitives," and he sketched "the universal confusion and dismay" along the turnpike:

"Wagons and ambulances lumbering hither and thither in disorder; pack horses led by frightened bummers, or wandering at their own free will; crowds of officers and men, some shod and some barefoot, many of them coatless and hatless, with and without their rifles, but all rushing wildly to the rear; oaths and blows alike powerless to halt them; a cavalry regiment stretched across the field, unable to stem the torrent."

Wright was in the middle of it, bareheaded, his beard all clotted with blood from a wound under the chin. He got the 2nd Connecticut heavies into line on a slope overlooking the highway, and as the men lay down to fire the sun came up and they found themselves looking directly into it, unable to see the Rebels, who were firing steadily: "We could see nothing but that enormous disk, rising out of the fog, while they could see every man in our line and could take good aim." The fog thinned, and more Confederates came in on the left and rear, and the regiment had to retreat, retreat turning quickly into a rout. General Emory brought over a brigade and sent it straight up the turnpike to break the Rebel charge and give time for a rally.

Federals and Confederates met head on and around the regimental battle flags there was furious fighting. A man in the 8th Vermont remembered that "men seemed more like demons than human beings as they struck fiercely at each other with clubbed muskets and bayonets," and at times it seemed that a dozen Confederates at once were reaching for each flagstaff. The colors tossed up and down in the dust and smoke. When they dropped the Southerners would cheer, and when they rose again the Northerners would cheer, and after a time the brigade got back out of the road and joined in the retreat. It still had all of its flags, but it had lost two thirds of its men.

Step by step, the whole army retreated, and by the middle of the morning it formed a shaky battle line four miles north of its original position. This line stretched away to the west of the pike, and there was a lull in the fighting, and the men scooped up little breastworks and got ready to meet another attack. Crook's corps was gone, and plenty of men had vanished from the other commands too, and all of these fugitives, together with the usual concourse of coffee boilers, wagoners, ambulance drivers, and the like were stretched out in steady flight all the way back to Winchester.

This flight was not a headlong rush, because even a frightened man cannot run so very far without pausing for breath. After the first panic wore off the men settled down to a walk, carrying on their flight, as one officer said, "in a manner as systematic as if they had been taught it." Now and then they would stop to make coffee and talk things over. Then they would go on again, sauntering along without haste but also without any intention of making a real halt anywhere. It was noticed, in this as in all similar cases, that it was almost impossible for any officer to rally and re-form such fugitives unless they recognized him as belonging to their own regiment or brigade. They would obey no strangers. They might fall into ranks obediently enough for a strange officer, but the ranks would evaporate as soon as he tried to lead them back into action.

The triumphant Confederates meanwhile had seized all of the Union camps, and had 1,300 prisoners and 18 of Sheridan's cannon in their possession. Ahead of them, perhaps a mile and a half to the north,

they could see the last Federal battle line; it was nearly two miles wide, and swarms of cavalry were forming up on either flank. and as Early looked at it he was jocund and full of confidence.

Exactly one month earlier his army had been running away from the Yankees, at Winchester. Now it was the Yankees who were in flight, and Early was in high spirits. A good many of his soldiers were leaving their commands to despoil the captured camps, with especial attention to the good food their foes had not been able to take with them, but this absenteeism did not worry him. He declared that the Yankee battle line visible west of the turnpike was no more than a rear guard. It would go away before long and the victory would be complete.

General Gordon was of a different notion.

"That is the VI Corps, general," he said. "It will not go unless we drive it from the field."

But Early would not listen to him. The Yankees had been beaten and most of them had run away: the rest would run away before long and that was all there was to it. Still, to play safe he put his staff to work to round up the camp looters and get them back into formation. From his headquarters post on a hilltop he continued to look north with deep satisfaction. Banks and Sigel, Hunter and Sheridan--they were all alike, when they collided with a Rebel army in the Valley!

. . . On a rise of ground just south of Winchester, about fifteen miles from the battlefield, the 17th Pennsylvania cavalry had been in bivouac. They had come down from Martinsburg, guarding trains against guerillas, and they had been ordered to wait here for General Sheridan, who had reached Winchester the night before on his return trip from Washington.

The day of October 19 began as usual for these troopers, with "Boots and Saddles" sounding before sunrise. As the men fed their horses and got their own breakfasts they could hear the mutter of gunfire, far to the south. Nobody thought much about it, since the word was that Wright was going to make a reconnaissance in force that morning to find out just where the Rebel army was, and it was assumed that that was the cause of the firing. The men finished their meal and stood by, waiting for the general.

Sheridan rode out about nine o'clock, a few aides riding with him. It was a sunny morning, bare fields rolling away to the hills and mountains which blazed with autumn colors, a warm Indian summer haze thickening the air. Off to the south there was that continued sound of firing, perhaps a bit louder now than it had been earlier. Sheridan seemed to be puzzled. As he picked up his cavalry escort he halted, dismounted, and bent over with his ear to the ground, listening intently. When he got back on his horse his swarthy face was clouded.

Down the road went general, aides, and cavalry, horses moving at a walk. After a mile or so they came upon a wagon train all in a tangle, wagons turned every which way, nobody moving. Sheridan sent his Major Forsyth trotting on ahead to see what was wrong, and presently Forsyth came back at a mad gallop. The train had been bound for the front, he reported, and at this spot had met an officer heading for Winchester bearing news that the army had been routed and was coming back in full retreat--on hearing which the teamsters had begun to swing their wagons around without waiting for orders.

Sheridan told Major Spera, the cavalry commander, to give him fifty of his best mounted men and to spread the rest across the road as traffic police: untangle the wagon train, round up fugitives, and in general see that everybody who thought he was going to Winchester turned and headed back for the place where the fighting was going on. Then with his chosen fifty Sheridan set off down the road, the horses moving at a walk no longer.

First they met wagon trains, coming back to escape capture, and these were told to park in the fields and await orders. Then they met the outriders of defeat--sutlers, camp followers of high and low degree, artillerymen without their guns, headquarters trains, battery wagons, caissons, and little knots of stragglers and walking wounded. A little farther on, they saw groups of men in the fields, clustering about campfires, boiling coffee, and they met increasing numbers of men walking along the highway. And always the sound of the firing grew louder.

Here and there Sheridan would rein up and call: "Turn back, men! Turn back! Face the other way!" Once he told a group of stragglers: "Face the other way, boys--if I had been there this morning this wouldn't have happened! You'll have your own camps back before night!"

Most of the time, however, he did not come to a halt but kept on at a gallop, swinging his hat in a great arc, now and then pointing toward the south, always calling: "Turn back, men! Turn back!"

The effect was electric. One group of coffee boilers, who had been stretched at ease around a fire, jumped up with a yell as he went past, kicked their coffeepots over, seized their muskets, and started back toward the battlefield. All along the way men sprang up and cheered. Those who were near the road turned and shouted, waving their arms in frantic signal, to attract the attention of men who were sauntering across fields a quarter of a mile away. They pointed to the speeding cavalcade in the road and at the top of their lungs they cried: "Sheridan! Sheridan!"

The Valley Pike had been macadamized once, but in the war years it had seen many armies and no repairs, and its surface now was all pitted and broken, and a cloud of white dust rose as the mounted men galloped on, Sheridan in front, the rest trailing after him.

Sheridan was on his favorite horse, a tireless black named Rienzi, and it became a fable and a folk legend how Rienzi went a full twenty miles at a gallop without stopping. The legend outdid reality. There were a number of little halts, when Sheridan would pull up to ask for news, and at one halt he had Major Forsyth cut a little switch for him, with which he birched Rienzi into greater speed. Once he met a panicky man riding to the rear on a mule, and he asked the man how things were at the front. "Oh, everything is lost and gone," shouted the man, "but it will be all right when you get there"--after which the man got the mule to a gallop and kept on in the direction of Winchester. Once Sheridan stopped to look in on a field hospital, and talked to some of the wounded. Counting everything, Rienzi had a number of chances to catch his breath.

Yet the legendary picture is close enough to fact: black-headed man on a great black horse, riding at furious speed, his escort dim in the dust behind him, waving his arm and swinging his absurd flat little hat and shouting continually the order to turn around and get back into the fighting; a man followed for many miles by the cheers of men who spun on their heels and returned to the firing line because they believed that if he was going to be there everything would be all right again--and because the look of him, and his great ringing voice, and the way he moved and rode and gestured somehow made going back into battle with him seem light and gay and exciting, even to men who had been in many battles.

Major Forsyth wrote that every time a group of stragglers saw Sheridan the result was the same--"a wild cheer of recognition, an answering wave of the cap." In no case, he said, did the men fail to shoulder their arms and follow the general, and for miles behind him the turnpike was crowded with men pressing forward to the front which they had run away from a few hours earlier. And all along the highway, for mile on mile, and in the fields beside the road, there went up the great jubilant chant: "Sheridan! Sheridan!"

As they got closer to the front Sheridan became grimmer. Major Forsyth wrote: "As he galloped on his features gradually grew set, as though carved in stone, and the same dull red glint I had seen in his piercing black eyes when, on other occasions, the battle was going against us, was there now."

They came at last to a ridge where there were batteries in action, dueling at long range; and up ahead, on the right of the road, they could see the ranks of the VI Corps, men standing in line waiting to be used. Sheridan came plowing up through the fainthearts and the skulkers, and his face was black as midnight, and now he was shouting: "Turn about, you damned cowardly curs, or I'll cut you down! I don't expect you to fight, but come and see men who like to!" And he swung his arm in a great inclusive gesture toward the VI Corps up ahead.

These men had been waiting in line for an hour or more. As veterans, they knew that the army had been beaten in a tail and not by head-on assault, and they were grumbling about it, making profane remarks about men who ran away--and then, far behind them, they heard cheering.

"We were astounded," wrote a man in the Vermont Brigade. "There we stood, driven four miles already, quietly waiting for what might be further and immediate disaster, and far in the rear we heard the stragglers and hospital bummers and the gunless artillerymen actually cheering as though a victory had been won. We could hardly believe our ears."

And then, while the men were still looking their questions at one another, out in front of the line came Sheridan himself, still riding at a swinging gallop--and the whole army corps blew up in the wildest cheer it had ever given in all of its career, and the roar went rocketing along the line as Sheridan rode on past brigade after brigade of the toughest veterans in the Army of the Potomac. The Vermont Brigade's historian wrote fondly:

"Such a scene as his presence produced and such emotions as it awoke cannot be realized once in a century. All outward manifestations were as enthusiastic as men are capable of exhibiting; cheers seemed to come from throats of brass, and caps were thrown to the tops of the scattering oaks; but beneath and yet superior to these noisy demonstrations there was in every heart a revulsion of feeling, and a pressure of emotion, beyond description. No more doubt or chance for doubt existed; we were safe, perfectly and unconditionally safe, and every man knew it."

All along the line went Sheridan, waving his hat, telling the troops: "Boys, we'll get the tightest twist on them they ever saw. We'll get all those camps back." To a colonel who rode up and said they were glad to see him, Sheridan replied: "Well, by God, I'm glad to be here!" And to another officer, still pessimistic from the morning's licking, who said that Early intended to drive them clear out of the Shenandoah Valley, Sheridan barked in fury: "What? Three corps of infantry and all of my cavalry; Jubal Early drive me out of the valley? I'll lick him like blazes before night! I'll give him the worst licking he ever had!"

And that was the way of it, in the end. After Sheridan passed by the men in line retied their shoes, tucked pants legs inside their socks, tightened their belts, unfastened cartridge-box lids, slid ramrods down rifle barrels to make sure the weapons were loaded, and jerked their forage caps down lower on their foreheads. From the rear the returning stragglers came up in droves, wandering along the lines, finding their proper regiments and taking their places--to the tune of jibes from their comrades. Sheridan went to General Wright, who was lying on the

ground, his throat and chin all swollen, blood on his coat. It was hard for him to talk, but he got up when Sheridan came, made his report, and prepared to go into action. Sheridan took plenty of time, waiting for his stragglers to come up, and it was nearly four in the afternoon when his battle line finally went forward.

When it hit, it hit hard. Confederate ranks were thinned by the absence of men who persisted in foraging among what the Yankees had left, and if all of the absentees had been in line Sheridan still would have had more men than Early had. Anyway, this Federal army knew it was going to win, at last, and it rolled up to the Rebel lines with irresistible might.

One of Emory's men reported that the Confederates were retreating presently "in precisely the same kind of disorder we had exhibited that morning," and he wrote that they pursued eagerly because "the sight of so many rebel heels made it an easy thing to be brave." On a ridge, by and by, the Confederates made a stand, and with their heels no longer visible the joys of pursuit were not quite so overpowering; but Sheridan had a great mass of cavalry swinging in on the flank like a scythe, and it sheared in behind the Rebel infantry and the whole line gave way, and a disordered rout went southward as dusk came down.

Cheering madly, the Federal infantry pressed on, determined not to stop until they had at least got past their old camping grounds. At times it seemed as if the front were all flags, since the color sergeants were not loaded down with weapons and accouterments and so could run faster than the others. The infantry pressed on so hard that George Custer once turned to his mounted men, pointing, and cried: "Are you going to let infantry get ahead of you?"

It was the cavalry that made the victory complete. It cannoned into the Confederate wagon and artillery train, smashed a bridge near the town of Strasburg, and went bucketing up and down and back and forth through the whole confused retreat. All of the Federal guns and wagons that had been lost that morning were retaken, together with twenty-five Confederate guns and any number of wagons, and Early's army was ruined.

At times the cavalry was going too fast to take prisoners. Rebels who surrendered would be told, "You stay here!" while the captors rode off to get more--after which most of the prisoners would disappear in the dark and try to rejoin their comrades. A South Carolina officer who got away recalled that he had surrendered five times during the retreat. The 5th New York boasted that one of its troopers, a tough Montenegrin named Heiduc, had personally sabered the two teamsters of a Confederate baggage wagon and had himself brought the vehicle back to camp.

Sheridan's word was good. The troops occupied their old camps that night, and at least some of them found that hardly any of their things had been taken; possibly fewer Rebels left the ranks for plunder than Early afterward alleged. A field in front of Sheridan's headquarters was filled with captured materiel--guns and ambulances and baggage wagons and stacks of muskets--and Sheridan's hell-for-leather scouts equipped themselves with a score of captured Confederate flags and paraded wildly across the firelight with them. General Emory watched Sheridan ride proudly by and he mused: "That young man has made a great name for himself today."

(From Bruce Catton, A Stillness at Appomattox, pp. 306-317.)

* * * * *

A Confederate General who provides a striking leadership example in many aspects is Nathan Bedford Forrest; his background and manner of leadership can prove illuminating.

On the fourteenth day of June 1861, one month before his fortieth birthday, Nathan Bedford Forrest quietly walked into a Memphis recruiting office to enlist as a private in the service of the Confederate States of America.

In age, in appearance, in his air of successful management of affairs, the new trooper in Captain Josiah White's company of Tennessee Mounted Rangers stood out from the general run of eager youth crowding to enlist in the Confederate cause. There was six feet two of him, lithe and powerful of build, with steady eyes of deep gray-blue set wide in a lean, high-cheeked, swarthy face crowned with thick, wavy, iron-gray hair and set off with a short black chin beard--altogether a man of striking and commanding presence.

But he was no beau sabreur of the sort in whom the South delighted. Rather, he was a middle-aged, quiet-spoken businessman who, by the time he was forty, had earned from nothing a fortune, according to his own estimate, of more than a million dollars, and who was going to war in no mood of youthful and romantic adventure, but in cold and sober earnest, wholly and without reservation. "I went into the war because my vote had been unable to preserve the peace," he said in an interview published in the New York Times of June 22, 1868. But he added, "I took a through ticket, and I fought and lost as much as any one else; certainly as much as I could."

This one private soldier of all the armies of that war who was to rise to the rank of lieutenant general, and whose operations, long after he was dead, were to receive the respectful study of commanders of armies in the United States and in Europe, had no military education whatsoever.

His formal education of any sort, indeed, is supposed to have consisted of no more than three months of schooling in the village of Chapel Hill, in Middle Tennessee, where he was born in 1821, and about

as much more between his thirteenth year, when the family removed to Tippah County, in northern Mississippi, and his sixteenth year, when the death of his pioneer blacksmith father threw upon young Bedford, as the eldest son, much of the care and support of a widowed mother and nine younger children.

To the handicap of lack of education there was added another--the nature of the business in which Forrest made his fortune. Along with trading in lands and livestock and cotton planting, he had engaged in a large and conspicuous way in the buying and selling of slaves. It was a business entirely lawful at the time and place, but it is a commentary upon the South's "peculiar institution" that even among those who owned them, and who upon occasion bought and sold them, there attached to the commercial traffic in slaves a certain social stain. And this was true even where, as in the case of Forrest, the dealer was more than usually kind to his human stock in trade. "There were men in Memphis," Lafcadio Hearn reported, "to whom Forrest would never sell a slave because they had the reputation of being cruel masters."

Forrest's fame was all before him when he enlisted as a forty-year-old private soldier, but locally, in the rising river port of Memphis, he had already come to be known as a man of substance and standing in the commercial world. By some he is remembered as "arbitrary, imperious, and determined," a man "fierce and terrible." It is agreed that "his temper when aroused was terrific," and his "language was often violent and profane, but never vulgar or obscene." In a society which took its liquor hard and treated tobacco as a staple of life, he drank not at all, never smoked and did not even "chew." Despite his outbursts of temper, there was about him at other times a grave dignity.

He was, indeed, a man of mixed nature, compounded of violence and of gentleness. But through all the contradictions of a contradictory character, in one thing there was never a variation, never a contradiction. Always and everywhere, whenever and wherever there was fighting to be done, he fought.

Nor was that all, for as he stood there in Captain White's recruiting office, quietly taking the oath which made of him a soldier in the Confederate service, there was latent in him the power to create and to command armies. "His commission as General," one of his soldiers, Sergeant Frank T. Reid, wrote, "was signed not only by Mr. Jefferson Davis, but by the Almighty as well."

"And," Sergeant Reid added, "his soldiers knew it." They were, indeed, the first to discover it. "It cost something to ride with Forrest," another one of them wrote afterward, but for what it cost they got victory. His men "he ruled so that they feared him more than the enemy," Lafcadio Hearn concluded from what was told him by old soldiers and citizens of Memphis, "and yet they confided in him as

though he were incapable of an error or a fault. " They recognized in him the qualities of sagacity and energy, of courage and constancy in his chosen course, and that rare and most uncommon quality called common sense, and so they gave him, as man and soldiers, an immense confidence. They went where he told them to go, and they did what he told them to do because they believed in Old Bedford, and when Old Bedford led they believed in themselves.

These soldiers of Forrest's were not a selected corps d'elite of scions of the white-columned mansions of the South. They were very much run-of-the-mine young fellows, many of whom were secured during the latter stages of the war by vigorous and even ruthless application of the conscript law. From such average material, the magic hand of Forrest made a sort of early model of today's Commandos or Rangers. Under him, wrote Lieutenant Colonel George T. Denison of the British army in his standard History of Cavalry, horse troops "could perform outpost duty with wonderful ability; they could dismount and fight in line of battle against infantry, cavalry or artillery; they could attack fortifications, capture gunboats, storm stockades, in fact, do anything that could be expected of soldiers."

And so, as a veteran of Forrest's Old Brigade said, "as long as we followed him we enjoyed the respect of the army. If we passed a regiment of infantry they would heap on us the customary contempt for cavalry but when they learned that we belonged to Forrest's people they would change tune and fraternize with us as real soldiers. . . We were heroes, even to the infantry." Which is praise as high as could be won by any body of troops.

Those against whom Forrest fought came, too, to an early realization that this was no common soldier and no ordinary commander. General Grant, reflecting upon the whole course of the Confederate War, rated Forrest as "about the ablest cavalry general in the South." To General Sherman, during the heat of the war, he was "that devil Forrest," who must be "hunted down and killed if it costs ten thousand lives and bankrupts the Federal treasury." Hardly could a soldier have won more sincere recognition from those against whom he fought.

Forrest's gift for strategy was a constant wonder and delight to the young men who served under him, many of them men of wide education and some of them capable professional soldiers. Logistics, probably, wasn't even a word to him, but he was "a good quartermaster and commissary as well as soldier," with an instinctive perception of the importance of the care, feeding and supply of men and horses, and a vast practical talent in seeing that his men and his horses were looked after, down to the infinity of detail which makes or mars a command. "In Forrest's command, a sore-backed horse was a felony."

More than this, he infused into his whole command his own spirit and purpose, his own energy and vitality. For him men, and even horses,

marched impossible marches to fight impossible fights and win incredible victories. His men remembered the "electrical effect" of his passage from rear to front along columns of "men and beasts worn out with loss of sleep and with work and hunger," as they struggled through swamps in the darkness of night and torrents of rain. They remembered how, "at the sound of that strange, shrill voice, and at the sight of that dark form. . . riding by on his big gray war-steed" men were "invigorated as by the first fresh breath of early dawn" and "the very horses recovered their strength." Another soldier, an infantryman who served under Forrest only during the dreadful midwinter retreat of the rear guard of Hood's broken army after the battle of Nashville, remembered how the General gave up his own horse to help along men of the bleeding "barefoot brigade"--and how, too, the gloom of that most gloomy Christmas season was lightened by the presence of Forrest "as he rode the lines, the light of battle in his eye and the thunderous 'Charge!' upon his lips." On that day, the soldier wrote thirty-five years later, "he rode into my heart as well. . . and rides there still."

He was not only a commander but himself a trooper in the very midst of combat wounded four times, with horses shot under him twenty-nine times, with no fewer than thirty enemy soldiers accounted for in hand-to-hand fighting in the almost innumerable affairs at arms in which he was engaged.

In that world, Forrest did not "belong," nor did he conform. And so while the war went on, this unknown in the West who raised regiments, brigades and divisions, and armed and equipped them mostly at the expense of the enemy, was rated at Richmond as little more than a "bold and enterprising raider and rider," a sort of glorified guerrilla whose habit of winning battles in an unorthodox fashion could not make up for this lack of familiarity with the minutiae of army regulations and the fine print of the drill books.

And so Forrest was, until almost the very last of the war, held to be incapable of military command in the large. What he could have accomplished with larger forces, no one can say for sure. What he did was to make the most of what he had in every situation. "He continually grew in power to the last," as one scholarly Virginian under whom he served for a season wrote of him, "and was ever greater than his opportunities."

Forrest's men never tired of talking of his course and sagacity, and of his care for his men and horses, as well as the demands he made upon them. They talked of the flash of his eye, the brassy clangor of his voice in the charge, so unlike his quiet and low speech at other times. They talked of his way with men, of his exploding and consuming wrath, of his unexpected touches of gentleness and sentiment. They talked of his unwearying vitality and his unyielding will, and, above all, of the strategy, bold and wily, by which he won his, and their,

fight--a strategy which Sherman described as "original and to me incomprehensible," which met attack by attacking, and never, until the falling days at the very last, stood to receive an attack of the enemy.

These men, whose point of pride ever after was that in the days of their youth they, too, "rode with Old Bedford," talked of him as the man of the Hellenic main and the islands of the Aegean might have talked of Ajax or Achilles--for Forrest was a figure about whom, even while he lived, legend began to gather.

Through fact and through legend, there stands out the man and the soldier of whom it was to be truly written, on the day of his funeral, that "he was fairly worshipped" by his old soldiers, and who fifteen years later was to be held up by the General in Chief of the British Imperial forces as the ideal of a leader for the mounted forces of his country; who was to be adjudged by one commander under whom he served "the greatest soldier the war produced" on either side; and by another, "the greatest soldier of his time." Through the years he has grown in stature until in our time his fundamental rule of victory, to "get there first with the most," has come to be accepted all over the world as the very antithesis of "too little, too late."

(From Robert S. Henry, 'First With the Most' Forrest, pp. 13-21.)

One of the great stories of success against odds to come out of the American Civil War is the battle of Okolona, 22 February 1864, where Forrest decisively defeated a force around three times his own strength (he had only about 2500 mostly new troops, not all armed). The opportunity presented itself as Union General W. Sooy Smith moved from Memphis into northern Mississippi enroute to join forces with General W. T. Sherman at Meridian.

Forrest himself, who had been away with the eastern column, came up as the fight was going on to find Chalmers standing on the causeway leading to the bridge. "His manner was nervous, impatient and imperious," said Chalmers, who tells the story of this first fight in which he saw Forrest engaged. "He asked me what the enemy were doing, and when I gave him the report just received from Colonel Duff, in command of the pickets, he said sharply, "I will go and see myself."

Chalmers followed his new commander across "the bridge, about thirty yards long and then being raked by the enemy's fire." As they reached the other bank they met a panic-stricken Confederate soldier, hat, gun, everything thrown away, running to the rear. Forrest jumped from his horse, dragged the fleeing soldier to the roadside, thrashed him with a piece of brush, straightened him up on his feet, faced him to the front and started him back to the battle. "Now, God damn you, go back there and fight; you might as well be killed there as here, for if you ever run away again you'll not get off so easy," he said.

The affair of Forrest and the runaway soldier at Kilia' Bridge became the subject of an illustration in Harper's Weekly of "Forrest breaking in a conscript" but it was not his usual method of making soldiers and binding them to himself. His favorite command, "Come on, boys!" was, according to one of his soldiers, the main secret of his success in leading men. "The safest place is over yonder," he would say, pointing toward the enemy. "Come on!" To one group, rejoining just as the fight was coming on, unarmed and asking for weapons, Forrest's command was "Just follow along here, and pretty soon there will be a fight over yonder, and you can get you some guns"--illustrating his original and individual methods of both command and supply.

"No sooner had we turned tail," wrote Colonel George E. Waring, commanding one of Smith's brigades, "than Forrest saw that his time had come, and he pressed us sorely all day and until nightfall." The retreating Union forces made their strongest stand and hardest fight about four miles north of West Point, taking advantage of a position in a skirt of post-oak timber which could be reached only by a narrow causeway and bridge. To attack such a position Forrest dismounted his men, sent one regiment around to strike the enemy in the rear and threw the rest of the force against their front.

"This was their first fighting under their new commander, Forrest," wrote the historian of the Seventh Tennessee Cavalry (the regiment which then included the company in which Forrest had once been a private), "and his immediate presence seemed to inspire every one with his terrible energy, more like that of a piece of powerful steam machinery than of a human being."

The combined attack caused a hurried withdrawal of the enemy. Forrest's men remounted and took up the pursuit, driving the enemy from several short stands and keeping so close to them that with the coming of night Forrest's men mistook their own General and his escort for a party of the enemy and fired a volley into them, killing one man and putting a bullet through Forrest's clothes. With this near-repetition of the tragedy of Jackson and his men at Chancellorsville, pursuit was called off for the night, with the pursuing troops occupying a Federal campground fourteen miles south of Okolona in which they found much forage and subsistence left by its retreating owners, and even burning campfires and the wood to keep them going, especially grateful on a sharp February night.

The retreating Federal column continued the weary march through the night until 2:00 A.M., to put ten miles of distance between themselves and their troublesome pursuers before camp was finally made about four miles south of Okolona. Forrest had his men up at four in the morning of February twenty-second and before dawn was on his way after the enemy. Having outdistanced his main body, Forrest and his seemingly

tireless escort overtook the Union pickets four miles south of Okolona, and followed them as they fell back through the town to a line of resistance formed a mile or so beyond.

To deliver the attack which the Union line was ready to receive Forrest had with him at the moment no more than his staff and escort company, but looking to the east he spied across the open prairie country which surrounds Okolona another Confederate force--Bell's brigade which its temporary commander, Barteau, had put in motion at three o'clock that morning, despite the fact that they had crossed and recrossed the Tombigbee on successive nights and had marched all of the two preceding days. Barteau, indeed, had been on the field for an anxious hour, facing an overwhelming force of the enemy and wondering when Forrest and the pursuing troops would get up from the south.

Leaving his escort to keep up some sort of demonstration in front of the Union forces, Forrest himself rode across the prairie to the point where the Bell brigade was keeping up a lively skirmishing to gain time. But even with this brigade Forrest was in the uncomfortable position of being on an open plain with one small brigade and one company in the face of an enemy which, rightly handled, could easily have turned upon him and ruined him.

But Forrest had an instinctive realization of the value of the offensive in defense. It may have dated to an incident of his boyhood at Chapel Hill, when he was thrown into the midst of a snarling savage pack of dogs by a colt which he was breaking. He hit the ground expecting to be torn. Instead the dogs, frightened by having an object as large as a boy thrown at them, turned tail and fled. Forrest never forgot it. Even in his first important fight, at Fort Donelson, according to the story related by Gideon Pillow at a memorial meeting in Memphis just after Forrest's death, he applied the lesson. Threatened with a charge by heavy forces, he turned to Pillow, under whose command he was, and asked for orders to charge first, saying, "We can't hold them but we can run over them."

On the prairie at Okolona, Forrest applied the same principle. As he galloped across the short front of Bell's brigade with hat upraised in polite acknowledgment of the cheers of recognition which greeted him, he asked Barteau, but one question: "Where is the enemy's whole position?"

"You see it, General, and they are preparing to charge."

"Then we will charge them," was the instant reply, followed, as he reached the right of the line, with the order to mount and charge. When the charge ran into difficulties from the heavy fire of breech-loading carbines of the Federals, delivered from behind a fence, Forrest

put himself at the head of the Second Tennessee Cavalry, Barbeau's own regiment, rose to the standing position in the stirrups which added to his height and that of his horse to make him a truly gigantic and fearsome figure in a charge, called "Come on, boys!" and swept around to attack the flank of the Federal line.

(From *ibid.*, pp. 225-229.)

The attack was successful and began a rout of the Union forces which turned into a wild melee until the Union forces could organize a skirmish line after a retreat of five miles, where action resumed.

Bedford Forrest, seeing his best-beloved brother fall, rushed to his side, dismounted, lifted his body in his arms and held him tenderly, calling him repeatedly by name until he realized that Jeffrey was indeed dead. During the few minutes of this scene--less than ten minutes altogether--there was something of a lull in the fight, until the General, once more in command of himself and the situation, laid down the body of his brother, covered his face, quickly surveyed the field before him, started Colonel W.L. Duckworth, who took over the command of Jeffrey's brigade, around to the left to fall on the Federal flank and rear, lined up the escort company and ordered Jacob Gaus, his bugler, to sound the charge.

As Gaus brought from his battered bugle--it had the marks of two bullets on it--the notes of the charge, Forrest and the escort drove hard, directly at the Federal line which "broke to the rear and retreated at great speed," although it was speedily rallied. Into the re-formed line Forrest plunged with the little band of men who had been able to keep up with him, for a hand-to-hand fight with saber and pistol in which, it is said, Forrest himself disposed of three enemy soldiers. So desperate seemed his plight and that of the handful of men with him, however, that "Black Bob" McCulloch, whose wound had by that time been dressed, came charging to the rescue of his general, waving the blood-soaked bandages of his wounded hand above his head as a flag.

A mile beyond, where another fence with plantation buildings furnished a rallying place, another Union line awaited the headlong dash of Forrest's men. As they charged, the General's horse was killed and his saddle shattered under him. Private J.B. Long of his escort turned over his own horse to the General but soon this animal also was shot dead--just as the orderly brought up from the rear the General's own favorite charger, King Philip, who too was wounded, though not fatally, before the day was over.

In all the rush of the fight and even on this day of great personal loss and bereavement, Forrest had eyes for detail and willingness to relieve unnecessary suffering. As the Federal line broke back once

more, to the fifth position of the day, and Forrest dashed through the position just vacated, he heard from a hut used as a hospital such a cry of agony that he dismounted, entered, and found a Federal soldier who, in the midst of having his leg cut off, had been left by the fleeing surgeons with a amputating saw stuck fast in the marrow of the bone of his leg. Forrest administered with his handkerchief some of the precious little supply of chloroform which the Confederates had left, and sent for Doctor Cowan to take charge of the case and complete the amputation.

Doctor Cowan was at the time engaged in another errand of mercy upon which the General had sent him, just after the first horse to be killed under him that day was struck. While changing horses Forrest had noted a terror-stricken mother and her brood of children huddled behind their log cabin in a corner of the stick-and-daub chimney, as the retreating and pursuing tides of battle swept over their little place. To Cowan Forrest had entrusted the duty of placing the woman and the children for safety's sake in a pit in the corner of the yard from which the mud used in chinking the cabin and daubing the chimney had been dug.

"Ten miles from Pontotoc," Forrest reported, "they made a last and final effort to check pursuit. . . .They had formed in three linesdirectly in our front. . . .at intervals of several hundred pacesAs the advance of my column moved up they opened on us with artillery. My ammunition was nearly exhausted, and I knew that if we faltered they would in turn become the attacking party, and that disaster might follow. Many of my men were broken down and exhausted with clambering the hills on foot and fighting almost constantly for the last 9 miles."

In most characteristic fashion Forrest "determined, therefore, relying upon the bravery and courage of the few men I had up, to advance to the attack. As we moved up, the whole force [of the enemy] charged down at a gallop, and I am proud to say that my men. . . .standing firm, repulsed the grandest cavalry charge I have ever witnessed. . . ." They drove back each successive wave of the charge as it came forward, with rifle and revolver fire, and in turn captured another piece of artillery as the Union troops fell back from their position.

How the Confederate line withstood and broke the charge which so excited Forrest's admiration was thus explained, after the war, by Lieutenant William Witherspoon of the Seventh Tennessee, to one who was in the Federal charge:

". . .We opened ranks to extend across the field. As the line was formed, Forrest rode into the field, in our rear, saying to us, 'I think they are going to charge you, boys, hold this line for me.' He passed on down the line repeating it. . . .Now, when you charged that line, it was not one

Forrest you were contending with, but every man in that line was a Forrest."

However, as Lieutenant Witherspoon went on to explain, there were reasons of tactics as well as of morale for the result.

"You made a formidable appearance, mounted, with your chargers well reined and sabres drawn. . . .At the sound of the bugle you dashed forward, holding your horse with the left hand and the sabre grasped by the right. We were meeting each other, you in a mad gallop, with us at a halt. Forrest's style was always to meet a charge with a counterattack. . . .When you were near enough for our rifles to do good work we commenced pumping lead. Some of you were firing occasionally, but the greater part of you were intent on holding that rein and sabre. As you got within seventy-five yards we dropped our carbines (which were strung by a strap across the shoulder, drew the navy sixes, one in each hand--we had discharged sabres as a fighting weapon--then we fed you on lead so fast and furious you whirled with your backs to us. Then it was again with the carbine until you got back into the woods and we saw you were forming again. 'Well, boys, we whipped the first charge, and we can whip the next,' was the universal remark with us. . . ."

(From *ibid.*, pp. 230-232.)

The charges were made only to cover the retreat of the Union column; Forrest's men beat off two more charges while the Union forces made good their chaotic escape.

* * * * *

The temperament and professionalism of commanders in the Civil War are two topics worth examining at greater length. Forrest's temperament was stressed in the excerpts above; he was an irascible, violent, and humorless officer who understood and had great compassion for his men. In addition, he was a consummate professional cavalryman through practice and intuition rather than formal training.

Charles Griffin was a Union artillery officer who had graduated from West Point in 1847. He had served in the Mexican War from Veracruz to Pueblo and campaigned against Navajos in New Mexico after 1854. An instructor at West Point when the war broke out, he commanded the West Point battery at First Bull Run and fought through the Peninsular Campaign. At Second Bull Run he argued so violently with General Pope that Court-Martial was threatened, although he was cleared of the charge. Given command of a division, he fought at Antietam and Fredericksburg. At Chancellorsville, he was in Meade's Corps when a Confederate breakthrough threatened:

In the center, coming from the Chancellorsville crossroads, a solid mass of Rebels was advancing as if Lee planned to break through the angle by sheer weight and drive the whole Union Army into the river. This part of the line was held by Meade, and he rode up to his divisional commander, General Charles Griffin, pointed to the approaching enemy column, and told him to drive it back.

Griffin was an old artilleryman, one of the numerous excellent generals contributed to the Union Army by the regular artillery, and he still liked his guns. (One of his men once remarked that Griffin would have run his guns out on the skirmish line if he had been allowed to.) He now asked Meade if he might use artillery instead of infantry to check the Rebels. Meade told him that would be all right if he thought gunfire alone would do the job.

To an old gunner there could be just one answer to that.

"I'll make 'em think hell isn't half a mile off!" cried Griffin. He wheeled a dozen guns up into line. Dismounting, he told the gunners to load with double charges of canister, to wait until the assaulting column was within fifty yards, "and then roll 'em along the ground like this," stopping and swinging his arm forward like a bowler. The gunners did as directed. The head of the Confederate column was smashed in, and the rest drew back. For the time being, at least, the army was safe.

(From Bruce Catton, Glory Road, pp. 202ff.)

Later, Griffin was to fight at Gettysburg and in all battles from the Wilderness through surrender at Appomattox, where he received the surrender of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. Why he never rose above the position of division commander is something of a mystery, although a clue can be inferred from the fact that virtually everyone who comments on Griffin mentions his argumentativeness as often as they mention his professional skills. The "old artilleryman" was thirty-eight at Chancellorsville.

* * * * *

One of the most famous citizen-soldiers of the Civil War was Joshua Chamberlain of the 20th Maine. Born in 1824, he had graduated from college and attended a theological seminary. At the outbreak of the war, he was professor of modern languages at Bowdoin. Commissioned Lieutenant Colonel of the 20th Main Infantry, he would participate in twenty-four major battles and rise to the rank of Major General.

At Gettysburg, after an all-day approach march, Chamberlain's 20th Maine was placed at the extreme left flank of the Union line, on Little Round Top. If the regiment did not hold its ground, it was doubtful that the Union line could be held.

In the end the control of Little Round Top was to be decided not by the bitterly engaged troops on the west slope but by Chamberlain and his little Maine regiment over on the other side of the hill. Oates' Alabamians assaulted not only Chamberlain's front but came tearing up on what they presumed was his exposed flank with the rush and energy of men who had just rested instead of troops who had been on their feet since three o'clock in the morning. Then, where there had been nothing except rocks and trees, a blast of fire leaped out at them. Staggered, they stormed up again on what was now the right and left fronts. "Again and again," said Captain Howard Prince of the 20th Maine, "was this mad rush repeated, each time to be beaten off by the ever-thinning line that desperately clung to its ledge of rocks." "The two lines met and broke and mingled in the shock," Chamberlain said. "The crash of musketry gave way to cuts and thrusts, grapplings and wrestlings. The edge of conflict swayed to and fro, with whirlpools and eddies. At times I saw around me more of the enemy than of my own men; gaps opening, swallowing, closing again with sharp, convulsive energy; squads of stalwart men who had cut their way through us, disappearing as if translated. All around, strange, mingled roar,--shouts of defiance, rally, and desperation."

There seemed to be no end to the furious battle. Men frantically tore the cartridges from their boxes, bit the caps, rammed the cartridges home with steel rammers that clashed in the heated gun barrels, then fired, their hands and faces turning black with burning powder. For a while, said Theodore Gerrish, "Our line is pressed back so far that our dead are within the lines of the enemy." Oates thought his Alabamians had penetrated the Maine defense five times, but somehow the Northerners found strength enough to hurl his men back: ". . . five times they rallied and charged us," he admitted. "If I had had one more regiment," Oates said, "we would have completely turned the flank and have won Little Round Top, which would have forced Meade's whole left wing to retire." Throughout his life he never ceased to deplore that he had not been supported. But to Chamberlain and his hard-pressed men it looked several times as if Oates with the 15th and 47th had enough and more. Chamberlain had almost everyone in the line--his sick, cooks, bandmen, pioneers, provost guard, even two mutineers from the old 2nd Maine who had been prisoners; only the hospital force remained aloof, and they had grim work of their own to do.

Once during the melee he experienced a dreadful moment: "I saw through a sudden rift in the thick smoke our colors standing alone. I first thought some optical illusion imposed upon me. But as forms emerged through the drifting smoke, the truth came to view. The cross-fire had cut keenly; the center had been almost shot away; only two of the color guard had been left, and they fighting to fill the whole space; and in the center, wreathed in battle smoke, stood the Color-Sergeant, Andrew Tozier. His color-staff planted in the ground at his side, the

upper part clasped in his elbow, so holding the flag upright, with musket and cartridges seized from the fallen comrade at his side he was defending his sacred trust in the manner of the songs of chivalry. It was a stirring picture--its import still more stirring. That color must be saved, and that center too."

Chamberlain sent his adjutant, brother Tom, and an orderly, Sergeant Ruel Thomas, to fill that gap by pulling men over from neighboring companies or contracting the salient. The fighting was so heavy he began to wonder if they would get back alive, but they came out with scarcely anything more than a scratch.

A lull now occurred as the Confederates drew back to regroup, and Chamberlain took advantage of the moments to gather his dead and wounded. As he walked over the field, he came across a young man, George Washington Buck, who had been a sergeant at Fredericksburg but whose commanding officer had taken away his stripes back at Stoneman's Switch for his refusing, when sick, to perform a menial personal service for a bullying quartermaster, who was eventually to spend several years in the Maine State prison for attempting to rob a bank. Buck had torn his shirt away from his chest which was covered with blood from a mortal wound. "Tell my mother I did not die a coward!" he whispered. Chamberlain quickly told him he was promoting him at once to a sergeant, and had him borne from the field. The sights Chamberlain saw as he continued his inspection were dreadful, dead men contorted into grotesque postures, wounded men writhing, blood trickling down the rocks and gathering in little pools. For that matter, he had barely missed death himself. A soldier of the 15th Alabama saw him standing behind the center of his line and recognized, by Chamberlain's uniform and actions, that here was a great prize to be put out of the way. As the soldier wrote him, years afterward, "I rested my gun on the rock and took steady aim. I started to pull the trigger, but some queer notion stopped me. Then I got ashamed of my weakness and went through the same motions again. I had you, perfectly certain. But that same queer something shut right down on me. I couldn't pull the trigger, and gave it up,--that is, your life. I am glad of it now, and hope you are." Yet Chamberlain had not escaped unscathed: blood dripped from his right instep where a rock splinter or piece of shell had penetrated, and he had a contusion on his left leg where his sword scabbard was smashed against it by a Minie ball.

But if Chamberlain's command had lost heavily, so had Oates'. "My dead and wounded were then nearly as great in number as those still on duty," Oates said. "They literally covered the ground. The blood stood in puddles in some places on the rocks." Several of his company officers were down. He saw his brother John die. Losses, however, did not deter those tough Alabamians, whom Chamberlain came greatly to admire. The 15th and 47th reformed, and this time it was now or never.

Chamberlain ordered his men to make every shot count, for his command was now paper-thin. Every man was in the line who could carry a gun, even the walking wounded including "one fine young fellow, who had been cut down early in the fight with a ghastly wound across his forehead" but who returned with a bloody bandage around his head." As Chamberlain studied the battle situation, "The formidable Fifteenth Alabama, repulsed and as we hoped dispersed, now in solid and orderly array--still more than twice our numbers--came rolling through the fringe of chaparral on our left. No dash, no yells; no demonstrations for effect; but settled purpose and determination! We opened on them as best we could. The fire was returned, cutting us to the quick. The Forty-Seventh Alabama had rallied on our right. We were enveloped in fire, and sure to be overwhelmed in fact when the great surge struck us. . . .Already I could see the bold flankers on their right darting out and creeping catlike under the smoke to gain our left, thrown back as it was. It was for us, then, once for all."

It did not seem possible to Chamberlain that he could withstand another shock like this one rolling up the hill. One half of his left wing was down--in fact one-third of the regiment was just behind the line dead or so badly wounded as to be out of action. Furthermore, Chamberlain's anxiety was increased by the great roar of musketry on the other side of the hill. Bullets from the Confederate assault there fell into Chamberlain's left rear so that he thought that Little Round Top was now about surrounded and only a desperate chance left to avoid defeat or death. He urgently requested of Captain O.S. Woodward, commander of the 83rd Pennsylvania, at least one company as a reinforcement. The 83rd could spare not a man, but Woodward agreed to extend his regiment farther to the left.

Then Chamberlain heard a frightening demand from his own men. "Ammunition!" they shouted. With sixty rounds to a man they had expended more than twenty thousand bullets. They reached frantically for the cartridge boxes of wounded comrades but found little left. Anxiously they turned to Chamberlain.

What to do now? As Chamberlain phrased it, "My thought was running deep." Despite Vincent's last order, to hold his ground was to invite disaster: in his present condition--one-third of his men out of action and the remainder out of ammunition--the enemy would have hit with a force "which we could not probably have withstood or survived." As he looked at his men grabbing the hot barrels of their muskets and preparing to use the butts as clubs, he saw the futility of it all. Desperate though the chance, he decided to counterattack. Calling Captain Ellis Spear to him, he told him that he wanted Spear to take the bent-back left wing and sweep down the hill to the right. Then as he limped over to instruct Captain A.W. Clark of Company E to hold that extreme right flank company tightly against the 83rd Pennsylvania and thus prevent

the enemy from breaking through, Lieutenant Holman S. Melcher of Company F, the color company, asked if he might go forward and bring in some of the wounded.

"Yes, sir, in a moment! Take your place with your company," Chamberlain replied. "I am about to order a 'right wheel forward' of the whole regiment."

He moved to the colors, all eyes upon him.

"Bayonet!"

The men rose with a shout, and the steel shanks of the bayonets clashed on the musket barrels. Sergeant Tozier raised the colors; the line quivered like sprinters on the mark. Then with the enemy only thirty yards away, young Melcher leaped out in front, his sword glittering in the slanting sunlight. "Come on! Come on! Come on, boys!" he shouted. Tozier dashed toward him. And with a wild yell the regiment flung itself down the hill, Ellis Spear's left wing whirling the enemy out of the rocks and soon fighting its way abreast of the right.

The Confederates recoiled, so bewildered they did not know whether to fight or surrender. At the onset, one Confederate officer fired a Navy Colt's pistol at Chamberlain's face, then handed over his sword in submission as Chamberlain's own sword pinked his throat. Chamberlain gave the surrendered sword to the non-com at his side but kept the pistol. Many in the first Confederate line tossed their weapons on the ground and held their hands up. Others were taken in fierce combat.

The 20th Maine swept forward like a reaper. A second line, composed of men from both the 15th and 47th Alabama, tried to make a stand near a stone wall. For a moment it looked as if they might succeed. Then a line of blue infantrymen rose from behind the wall and more than sixty rifles cracked in volley. This was Walter Morrill's B Company that Chamberlain had detached to guard his flank and a number of U.S. Sharpshooters whom Oates had driven off Round Top.

Attacked in front and rear, Oates gave the order to retreat, but he scarcely anticipated the panic that swept over his men: ". . . we ran like a herd of wild cattle," he admitted.

And after the fleeing Confederates charged the 20th Maine, bayonets flashing in the westering sun; Chamberlain was determined to make the most of his psychological surprise. Lieutenant Colonel Bulger of the 47th Alabama surrendered and Colonel Powell of the 4th Alabama was taken, badly wounded. Knots of the 4th and 5th Texas put up resistance, but these, too, finally surrendered or fled as the 20th Maine, "swinging," said Chamberlain, "like a great gate on his hinges, . . . swept the front clean of assailants."

It was with great difficulty that he halted his men when he reached the front of the 44th New York. Many of them declared they were "on the road to Richmond" and did not want to stop. Chamberlain, however, felt that he had gone far enough. He had only about two hundred men now, while the Texas regiments were rallying over on his right as were the Alabamians on his left who had fled up the slopes of Round Top. It was a tribute to the discipline of his men and the respect in which they held him that he finally got them into good order and withdrew to his original position.

Chamberlain and the 20th Maine had clearly saved the hill at what Colonel Rice of the 44th New York, succeeding the mortally wounded Vincent as brigade commander, called "the most critical time of the action." Entering the battle with 358 riflemen, the 20th Maine had 90 men wounded and 40 who were killed outright or who died of wounds. At the same time the regiment had inflicted even heavier casualties upon the enemy in dead and wounded and had captured nearly four hundred prisoners. It was a magnificent feat of arms, rarely if ever surpassed in the importance of its accomplishment by any regiment in American military history. And much of the success was directly attributable to Chamberlain's brilliant, imaginative leadership. Colonel Oates of the 15th Alabama said later, "There never were harder fighters than the Twentieth Maine men and their gallant Colonel. His skill and persistency and the great bravery of his men saved Little Round Top and the Army of the Potomac from defeat. Great events sometimes turn on comparatively small affairs." One of the "small affairs" in Oates' opinion was the loss of his own men's water bottles which obliged him to rest his thirsty troops on the summit of Round Top for ten fateful minutes, the margin of time by which Vincent had occupied Little Round Top before the Confederate assault.

Hard as they had fought, Chamberlain and his men had one more astonishing feat to perform before the day ended. A Texas orator eulogized after the war that the Texans with Hood had been victorious on every field "until God stopped them at Little Round Top." Possibly surmising that God might continue to aid them if they tried hard themselves, Chamberlain and Colonel Rice conferred in the early evening about the possibility of securing Round Top. The battlefield to the west and northwest was fairly quiet where Sickles, after horrible fighting in the Peach Orchard and the Wheatfield, let alone Devil's Den, had been forced to retire to his original position of the morning. To the north and northeast, action still blazed furiously as the Confederates stormed vainly against Culp's Hill. What both Rice and Chamberlain feared was that the Confederates might now do what Oates had originally wanted to do: emplace artillery on the summit of Round Top and enfilade the entire Federal defense. Colonel Joseph Fisher had come up in support of Rice with a brigade of Pennsylvania Reserves from General Crawford's 3rd Division of the Fifth Corps. At dusk Rice asked Fisher to seize Round Top. For some reason, Fisher declined, so Rice directed Chamberlain to go.

Although fresh ammunition had still not arrived, Chamberlain took out his two hundred men again in extended order and in one rank, with bayonets fixed. It was now nine o'clock, and practically dark under the trees with their summer foliage. Chamberlain felt that to go up the mountain with only the bayonet was hazardous but that, without the means to fire, his troops would expose neither their movement nor their few numbers. Yet as they climbed over the steep and jagged surface of Round Top in an order that became even more extended because of the nature of the terrain, the enemy could not help hearing them. Chamberlain in turn could hear the enemy falling back. When near the crest, the Confederates opened with a scattering fire that mortally wounded one of Chamberlain's officers. The 20th Maine then rushed the crest, capturing two officers and a half-dozen enlisted men in the ascent.

Chamberlain now drew his little command together in a solid front, and after placing them in a strong position among the rocks, sent back to Rice for ammunition and reinforcements. He was especially concerned about his right flank which was so close to the Confederates that he could hear their movements and their conversation. These were troops of the 15th and 47th Alabama whom Oates was trying to form into a line of resistance.

In a half-hour two of Fisher's regiments, which had found a wood road up the mountain, clumped and crashed through the underbrush near Chamberlain's right. Thinking they might be the enemy, Chamberlain readied his men for a desperate fight. But Oates had heard them, too, and the brisk fire his troops opened on the confused Reserves sent them scurrying back down the mountain side, or, as Chamberlain kindly expressed it in his report, the action "disheartened the supports themselves, so that I saw no more of them that night."

Realizing that in his isolated position his troops were vulnerable in the event that the enemy should attempt to envelop his right, Chamberlain quickly detailed a picket line on the front and left and withdrew the rest of his troops to the lower ground near the base of the mountain. He then hurried a messenger to Rice with a request that the 83rd Pennsylvania come up in support. Rice sent him not only the 83rd and supplies of ammunition but, shortly afterward, the 44th New York as well. Chamberlain then scrambled back up the mountain, sent out a strong picket line, and ordered the other troops to rest on their arms.

But he had little sleep that hot, sticky night. He had the picket line relieved every two hours and reports delivered to himself every half-hour. Despite their exertions of the previous day, the pickets grew adventurous. Slipping down the mountain, they discovered that the enemy had withdrawn to a line near the foot of Round Top. When they were close enough to see the Southern camp fires and hear voices, they withdrew. As it happened, they had appeared near the 4th and 5th Texas, and the Texans, hearing them, sent out a guard detail to see if

Although fresh ammunition had still not arrived, Chamberlain took out his two hundred men again in extended order and in one rank, with bayonets fixed. It was now nine o'clock, and practically dark under the trees with their summer foliage. Chamberlain felt that to go up the mountain with only the bayonet was hazardous but that, without the means to fire, his troops would expose neither their movement nor their few numbers. Yet as they climbed over the steep and jagged surface of Round Top in an order that became even more extended because of the nature of the terrain, the enemy could not help hearing them. Chamberlain in turn could hear the enemy falling back. When near the crest, the Confederates opened with a scattering fire that mortally wounded one of Chamberlain's officers. The 20th Maine then rushed the crest, capturing two officers and a half-dozen enlisted men in the ascent.

Chamberlain now drew his little command together in a solid front, and after placing them in a strong position among the rocks, sent back to Rice for ammunition and reinforcements. He was especially concerned about his right flank which was so close to the Confederates that he could hear their movements and their conversation. These were troops of the 15th and 47th Alabama whom Oates was trying to form into a line of resistance.

In a half-hour two of Fisher's regiments, which had found a wood road up the mountain, clumped and crashed through the underbrush near Chamberlain's right. Thinking they might be the enemy, Chamberlain readied his men for a desperate fight. But Oates had heard them, too, and the brisk fire his troops opened on the confused Reserves sent them scurrying back down the mountain side, or, as Chamberlain kindly expressed it in his report, the action "disheartened the supports themselves, so that I saw no more of them that night."

Realizing that in his isolated position his troops were vulnerable in the event that the enemy should attempt to envelop his right, Chamberlain quickly detailed a picket line on the front and left and withdrew the rest of his troops to the lower ground near the base of the mountain. He then hurried a messenger to Rice with a request that the 83rd Pennsylvania come up in support. Rice sent him not only the 83rd and supplies of ammunition but, shortly afterward, the 44th New York as well. Chamberlain then scrambled back up the mountain, sent out a strong picket line, and ordered the other troops to rest on their arms.

But he had little sleep that hot, sticky night. He had the picket line relieved every two hours and reports delivered to himself every half-hour. Despite their exertions of the previous day, the pickets grew adventurous. Slipping down the mountain, they discovered that the enemy had withdrawn to a line near the foot of Round Top. When they were close enough to see the Southern camp fires and hear voices, they withdrew. As it happened, they had appeared near the 4th and 5th Texas, and the Texans, hearing them, sent out a guard detail to see if

they were friends or foes. Halted and challenged by a Maine picket to identify themselves, the Texas answered, "Friends!" When they were then told to come right along, and did so, the Texans found themselves facing a line of leveled muskets. This little strategy continued until the 20th Maine had bagged twenty-five prisoners from the 4th Texas. More might have been taken if someone down at the left had not given the order to fire; and the silence was shattered by a flurry of musketry. Daylight brought sharp skirmishing at the foot of Round Top, and Chamberlain lost another officer.

By nine in the morning, Fisher's men finally having arrived, Chamberlain received orders to withdraw and go into reserve with the rest of Rice's brigade in support of the left center of Meade's main line of resistance on Cemetery Ridge.

(From Willard M. Wallace, The Soul of the Lion, pp. 96-107.)

Chamberlain's identification with his men and their respect for him is evident in this passage; a clue as to how this cohesion was achieved can be found in the regiment's actions after the battle.

While the rains started to fall on the 4th and Lee began his withdrawal unopposed, Rice took the brigade on a reconnaissance over to the Peach Orchard, even as far as Willoughby Run. Once returned, Chamberlain marched the regiment to Little Round Top to bury his dead. This was a sad if proud duty, but one that Chamberlain's regiment insisted on carrying out after every battle in the war. A marker made of an ammunition box with the soldier's name and home carved on it was placed at the head of each soldier's grave. Chamberlain never forgot the men who died on that hillside or their families. Later the bodies were removed to the National Cemetery, but Private Theodore Gerrish, who became a minister, regretted that they had not been left where they fell. After the burial, Chamberlain went to look after his wounded, whom he had originally placed in the houses of citizens east of Little Round top. The artillery barrage preceding Pickett's charge had necessitated their removal to less adequate if safer shelter two miles away, and Chamberlain found his brother John deeply distressed that a number of the men were partially exposed to the weather. Chamberlain gave what comfort he could to them.

(from *ibid.*, pp. 112ff.)

Political influence was often a prerequisite for becoming a general officer in the Civil War; Chamberlain's case is an example.

Chamberlain's friends worked hard to have him made a brigadier general that late summer and fall. Their representations to Secretary Stanton and Senator Fessenden of Maine were strong, particularly those from Generals Ames and Rice. The latter put the case plainly to Fessenden:

"My personal knowledge of this gallant officer's skill and bravery upon the battlefield, his ability in drill and discipline, and his fidelity to duty in camp, added to a just admiration for his scholarship, and respect for his Christian character, induces me to ask your influence in his behalf." Speaking of the second day of the battle of Gettysburg, Rice said, "History will give credit to the bravery and unflinching fortitude of the 20th Maine Volunteers more than to any other equal body of men upon the field. . . .The conduct of this Regiment at the battle of Gettysburg has rendered, for all time, the prowess of the arms of your State imperishable: conduct which, as an eye-witness, I do not hesitate to say, had its inspiration and great success from the moral power and personal heroism of Col. Chamberlain."

(from *ibid.*, p. 116.)

In spite of this pressure, Chamberlain would not be promoted soon. An important factor in this slow advance was that Chamberlain refused, unlike many officers in the Civil War and since, to promote his own advancement. In spite of his reticence, he would become a division commander and later governor of Maine.

* * * * *

To conclude combat leadership examples from the Civil War, a battle showing a variety of successful leadership styles and individual personalities will be examined.

In the spring of 1865, with Grant in command of the Union forces, Meade's Army of the Potomac (which Grant accompanied, in effect exercising command) greatly outnumbered Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. By the end of March, when Sheridan joined Meade's forces in lines in front of Petersburg, the ratio was more than two to one, and Grant decided to "end the matter."

To occupy the lines facing Petersburg, Grant detailed Ord's three divisions plus the IX Corps and the VI Corps. For a movable force to menace Lee's flank he thus had two full army corps--Humphrey's and the II Corps and Warren and the V Corps. He also had three superb divisions of cavalry under Sheridan, and from the moment he began to plan this move he seems to have concluded that the operation as a whole would be pretty largely under Sheridan's command.

He would start by sending Sheridan and the cavalry to the little hamlet of Dinwiddie Court House, half a dozen miles south and slightly west of the Hatcher's Run area. While Sheridan made this move Humphreys and Warren were to take their men up through the flat, wooded country closer to Hatcher's Run. They were not supposed to attack Confederate trenches there, but their presence might induce Lee to make a new extension of his line. At the very least it would cover Sheridan--who, from Dinwiddie Court House, could march northwest ten or twelve miles and strike the Southside Railroad. After that Sheridan might go on and break the Richmond and Danville road as well, and in the end he might

even go down cross country and join Sherman. Plans were fluid. The chief idea was to shake things loose an' end the long deadlock.

(From Bruce Catton, A Stillness at Appomattox, p. 343.)

But a period of bad weather ensued with the area around the army turning into a quagmire. Bad weather had brought an end to many an operation in the war, and could easily have stopped this one without the intervention of a personality as volatile and forceful as Sheridan's.

The top echelons in the Army of the Potomac, remembering an occasion near Fredericksburg when the army had got hopelessly stuck in the mud, urged Grant to call everything off, get everybody back to camp, and start again a week or two later when the ground was drier. Grant himself seems to have wavered, for a time. First he told Sheridan to forget about the railroads and smash straight for Lee's flank and rear; then he sent another message suggesting that all forward movement be suspended until the weather improved.

When he got this last letter Sheridan rode over to Grant's headquarters. The rain was still coming down and the mud was so deep that even Sheridan's horse could manage nothing better than a walk, sinking to his knees at every step, but Sheridan was all for action. To Grant's staff he expounded on the iniquity of delay--now was the time to move, Rebel cavalry could be knocked out of the way any time the commanding general pleased, and if Lee sent infantry out he was writing his own doom. Sheridan tramped back and forth in the mud and rain, striking his hands together. An officer asked how he would get forage for his 13,000 horses if the roads remained impassable.

"Forage?" echoed Sheridan. "I'll get all the forage I want. I'll haul it out if I have to set every man in the command to corduroying roads, and corduroy every mile of them from the railroad to Dinwiddie. I tell you I'm ready to strike out tomorrow and go to smashing things."

Staff suggested that Grant liked to hear that sort of talk, partly because it was so different from anything he ever got from top generals in the Army of the Potomac, and urged Sheridan to go speak his piece to the lieutenant general. Sheridan demurred: Grant hadn't asked him to come over, he was just sounding off to relieve his mind. A staff officer, however, slipped into Grant's tent and suggested that it would be good for him to talk to his cavalry commander, and in another moment Sheridan was repeating his little speech to Grant, strongly backed by impetuous Chief of Staff John Rawlins, with his pale cheeks and feverish burning eyes.

Grant made up his mind: the move would go on, bad roads or no bad roads, and it would not stop until there had been a final showdown.

Long afterward he confessed that he believed the country to be so desperately tired of the war that unless the move to the left was a complete victory it would be interpreted as a disastrous failure.

On March 31, therefore, with rain still falling and the country looking like the bottom of a millpond, the advance was resumed. Sheridan still had Custer's division at work behind Dinwiddie, fixing the bottomless road so that forage and provisions could be brought in, and he was holding most of a second division at Dinwiddie; and he sent the rest of the men marching north, and at a lonely country crossroads known as Five Forks they ran into the Rebels in strength.

Five Forks was nowhere at all, but it was important because it was where the road from Dinwiddie Court House to the Southside Railroad crossed the east-and-west road that led to Lee's right flank and rear. Lee's army could not stay in Petersburg if the Yankees held this crossroads, and so Lee had scraped his last reserves to make a fight for the place. Dug in behind temporary breastworks were five brigades of infantry under the legendary George Pickett. With the infantry was practically all of Lee's cavalry.

Up against this powerful force came one division of Yankee cavalry led by General Thomas C. Devin, a former New York militia colonel who had become enough of a soldier to suit the most exacting of Regulars. He had been a favorite of tough John Buford in the old Gettysburg days, and nowadays he was dubbed "Sheridan's hard hitter"--which, considering the general reputation of Sheridan's cavalry, was a fairly substantial compliment. This day he had his hands full. When his patrols reported Rebel infantry at Five Forks he dismounted his division and got ready to fight on foot. Pickett immediately obliged him, rolling forward a heavier battle line than Devin's men could handle, and before long the blue cavalry was in full retreat.

The Federals fought hard, withdrawing as slowly as they could manage and maintaining a steady fire, but they were heavily outnumbered and Confederate cavalry kept curling in around both flanks, and presently Devin had to warn Sheridan that he was badly overmatched and that they might have trouble holding Dinwiddie itself. He kept his fighting line dismounted because the men could put up a more stubborn resistance that way, and as they fought the area immediately behind the firing line was a howling madhouse.

All of the division's horses were here, four thousand and odd of them, one trooper to every four horses. The country was densely wooded, with few roads and many rail fences, and the air was full of smoke and bullets and shouting men, and the conditions under which one mounted man could easily lead three riderless horses did not exist. The horses became panicky and fractious, and they kept running on the wrong side

of trees, or colliding with each other, creating fearful tangles of kicking, plunging animals and snarled reins and cursing soldiers--and, said one of the men afterward, the whole business was enough to make anybody understand why an exceptionally profane man was always said to swear like a trooper.

While Devin's men gave ground Sheridan got the rest of his men strung out in line in front of Dinwiddie Court House, and at dusk the Confederates came storming up to drive the whole lot of Yankee cavalry back where it belonged. When Devin's men came in Sheridan put them into line with the rest, and he rolled forward all the guns he could lay his hands on. Then he rounded up all of the regimental bands and put them up on the firing line and ordered them to play the gayest tunes they knew--play them loud and keep on playing them, and never mind if a bullet goes through a trombone, or even a trombonist, now and then.

The late afternoon sun broke through the clouds, and all of these bands were playing, and there was a clatter of musketry and a booming of cannon and a floating loom of battle smoke. Sheridan got his little battle flag with the two stars on it and rode out in front of his lines, going from one end to the other at a full gallop, waving his hat and telling every last soldier--by his presence, by his gestures, and by the hard look in his black eyes--that nobody was going to make them retreat another step.

They held the line. At dusk Sheridan tried a counterattack, ordering Custer to make a mounted charge on a line of Rebel infantry. A man who saw him giving Custer his orders remembered Sheridan's emphasis: "You understand? I want you to give it to them!" Custer nodded, and he drove his squadrons forward--to a muddy anti-climax. The field across which the men tried to charge was so soupy with wet clay and rain water that the horses immediately bogged down, the charge came to nothing, and at last it was dark, with the Federals holding the town and the Confederates facing them just out of musket range.

It looked like trouble, for these venturesome Confederates had more men than Sheridan had and they were well behind the left end of the main Union line. But Sheridan saw it as opportunity; it was Pickett's force and not his that was in trouble, the Rebels were isolated and they could be cut off, and if the business were handled right none of them should ever get back to Lee's army. Off through the night to Grant went Sheridan's couriers with the message: Let me have the old VI Corps once more and I can really smash things.

The VI Corps Sheridan could not have, because it was too far off and with the roads as they were it would take two days to get it to him. Warren and the V Corps were available, however, no more than half a dozen miles away, and late that evening Warren was ordered to get his men over to Dinwiddie at top speed. Sheridan was told that they

would show up at dawn, and they would be coming in from the northeast, behind Pickett's flank. Warren had much more infantry than Pickett had, and Sheridan had much more cavalry. Between the two of them they might be able to destroy his entire force. Lee was so pinched for manpower that a loss of such dimensions would practically bankrupt him.

So Sheridan put his men into bivouac and waited impatiently for the morning. It was a restless night, since every square foot of open space behind the line was jammed with led horses and their grouchy caretakers, and it was an all-night job to get all of these straightened out so that the squadrons could be mounted next day if necessary. Trains of pack mules came up, bringing forage and rations, and the ambulances had got through--that work on the roads had been effective--and lanterns twinkled in the damp groves as stretcher parties went through, gathering up the wounded men.

(From *ibid.*, pp. 345-348.)

Major General Gouverneur Kemble Warren, whom Sheridan had ordered to join him "at top speed," was a thirty-five-year-old graduate of West Point who had been teaching mathematics at the Academy when the war broke out. He had commanded a regiment in the Peninsular Campaign, a brigade at Grant's Mill, Second Bull Run, and Antietam, and was the chief of engineers in the Army of the Potomac who helped save the Union left by taking Little Round Top before Chamberlain's 20th Maine was placed there. He had commanded V Corps in the Wilderness.

When the order arrived to join Sheridan, the Corps had just fought an all-day battle, wet, uncomfortable, with heavy losses. The Corps moved through the black night, through mud and swollen streams (although the rain had stopped), with much countermarching because of confusion over routes. By 0500, when Sheridan had expected the entire Corps to have closed at Dinwiddie Court House, two of Warren's divisions were only beginning their movement.

Sheridan was furious. He met the head of the infantry column in a gray dawn as the men came splashing up to the rendezvous, and he demanded of the brigadier commanding: "Where's Warren?" The brigadier explained that Warren was back with the rear of the column, and Sheridan growled: "That's where I expected to find him. What's he doing there?" The officer tried to explain that Warren was trying to make sure that his men could break contact with the Confederates without drawing an attack, but Sheridan was not appeased. Later, when Warren arrived, the two generals were seen tramping up and down by the roadside, Sheridan dark and tense, stamping angrily in the mud, Warren pale and tight-lipped, apparently trying to control himself.

* * * * *

The V Corps was one of the famous units of the whole Federal Army. Fitz-John Porter had commanded it, and it had been McClellan's favorite corps, and in general orders he had held it up as a model for the other corps to emulate, which caused jealousies that had not entirely worn away even yet. (It caused War Department suspicions, too, and promotion for higher officers in this corps was harder to get, it was said, than in the rest of the Army of the Potomac.) The corps had been built around a famous division of Regulars, and in the beginning all of its ranking officers had been Regulars, mostly of the stiff, old-army, knock-'em-dead variety. Its discipline tended to be severe, there was strict observance of military formalities, and the Regular Army flavor endured, even though many of the old officers and all of the Regular battalions had disappeared.

This was the corps which Sheridan now was preparing to use as his striking force. When Grant first sent the corps out to operate on Lee's flank, he did two curious things. He detached it from Meade's command and put it entirely under Sheridan, promising to do the same with the II Corps if Sheridan needed it--which was a bit odd, considering that Sheridan was simply the cavalry commander, while Meade commanded the Army of the Potomac--and he specifically authorized Sheridan to relieve Warren of his command, if it seemed necessary, and to put someone in his place.

Grant's subsequent explanation of these acts was brief and vague, but what he was actually trying to do was to find a solution for the old, baffling command problem that had beset the Army of the Potomac from its earliest days.

Time and again the Army of the Potomac had missed a victory because someone did not move quite fast enough, or failed to put all of his weight into a blow, or came into action other than precisely as he was expected to do. This had happened before Grant became general in chief and it had happened since then, and the fact that Warren had been involved in a few such incidents was not especially important. What Grant was really shooting at was the sluggishness and caution that were forever cropping out, at some critical moment, somewhere in the army's chain of command. With the decisive moment of the war coming up Grant was going to have no more of that. Instinctively, he was turning to Sheridan, Sheridan the driver--giving him as much of the army as he needed and in effect telling him to take it and be tough with it.

Sheridan was the man for it. As Warren's brigades struggled into position Sheridan was everywhere, needling the laggards, pricking the general officers on, sending his staff galloping from end to end of the line. He rounded up the cavalry bands, which had made music on the firing line the evening before, and he put them on horseback with orders to go into action along with the fighting men when the advance sounded. It was four o'clock by now, and there would not be a great

deal more daylight, and at last the infantry began to move. Sheridan spurred away to send the cavalry forward too. There was the peal of many bugles and then a great crash of musketry, and thousands of men broke into a cheer, and the battle was on.

A skirmisher trotting forward a few hundred yards ahead of the V Corps turned once to look back, and he saw what neither he nor any of his mates had seen in a dreary year of wilderness fighting and trench warfare, and he remembered it as the most stirring thing he had ever looked upon in all of his life. There they were, coming up behind him as if all of the power of a nation had been put into one disciplined mass--the fighting men of the V Corps, walking forward in battle lines that were a mile wide and many ranks deep, sunlight glinting on thousands of bright muskets, flags snapping in the breeze, brigade fronts taut with parade-ground Regular Army precision, everybody keeping step, tramping forward into battle to the sound of gunfire and distant music. To see this, wrote the skirmisher, was to see and to know "the grandeur and the sublimity of war."

It was grand and inspiring--and, unfortunately, there was a hitch in it.

Warren was sending his men in with two divisions abreast and a third division following in support, and by some mischance he was hitting the White Oak Road far to the east of the place where he was supposed to hit it. Instead of coming in on the knuckle of Pickett's line, he was coming in on nothing at all. His men were marching resolutely toward the north and the battle was going on somewhere to the west, out of their sight and reach.

The left division in the first line was commanded by General Ayres, a hard-bitten survivor of the original old-army set of officers, and the left of his division brushed against the left flank of Pickett's force and came under a sharp fire. Ayres spun the whole division around, brigade by brigade, making almost a 90-degree turn to the left--hot enough work it was, too, with Rebel infantry and cavalry firing steadily and the ground all broken--and as he turned the rest of the corps lost contact with him. The division that had been advancing beside him was led by General Crawford, who fell a good deal short of being one of the most skillful soldiers in the army, and Crawford kept marching to the north, getting farther away from the battle every minute. Most of the third division followed Crawford, Ayres's men were for the moment so entangled in their maneuver that they could not do much fighting--and, in sum, instead of crunching in on the Rebel flank with overpowering force, the V Corps was hardly doing more than giving it a brisk nudge.

A confusing long-range fire, heavy enough to hurt, kept coming in from the left, and smoke fog was drifting through woods and fields. Warren had gone riding frantically on to try to find Crawford and set

him straight, and entire brigades had lost touch with their corps and division commanders. One of these, presently, got into action, led by one of the most remarkable soldiers in the army, the hawk-nosed theologian turned general, Joshua Chamberlain of Maine.

Before the war Chamberlain had done nothing more militant than teach courses in natural and revealed religion, and later on in romance languages, at Bowdoin College. In 1862 he had been given a two-year leave of absence to study in Europe. Instead of going to Europe he had joined the army, and in a short time he showed up at Gettysburg as colonel of the 20th Maine Infantry, winning the Congressional Medal of Honor for his defense of Little Round Top. Since then he had been several times wounded--he had an arm in a sling today, as a matter of fact, from a wound received twenty-four hours earlier in the fight near Hatcher's Run--and he had twice won brevet promotions for bravery under fire. It was occurring to him now that since bullets were coming from the left there must be Confederates over that way, so he took his brigade over to do something about it.

Beyond a gully, Chamberlain could at last see a Confederate line of battle. He got his brigade into line, took it down into the little ravine, came out on the far side, and headed for the enemy. The fire was hot, now--and here, in the thickest of it, came Sheridan, riding up at top speed as always, his mounted color-bearer riding behind him. Sheridan pulled up facing Chamberlain, his dark face glowing.

"By God, that's what I want to see! General officers at the front!" cried Sheridan. He asked where Warren and the rest of the corps might be, and Chamberlain gestured toward the north, trying to explain what had happened. Sheridan interrupted, saying that Chamberlain was to take command of everybody he saw in the immediate vicinity and press the attack--and then Sheridan rode off fast, looking for Warren and the missing infantry.

* * * * *

Sheridan was all over the field. When a skirmish line met a severe fire, wavered, and seemed ready to fall back, up came Sheridan at a gallop, shouting to the men: "Come on--go at 'em--move on with a clean jump or you'll not catch one of 'em! They're all getting ready to run now, and if you don't get on to them in five minutes they'll every one get away from you!" An infantryman at his side was struck in the throat and fell, blood flowing as if his jugular vein had been cut. "You're not hurt a bit!" cried Sheridan. "Pick up your gun, man, and move right on!" The soldier looked up at him, then obediently took his musket, got to his feet, and staggered forward--to drop dead after half a dozen steps. Chamberlain came up to Sheridan once and begged him not to expose himself on the front line, promising that the rest of them would press

the attack. Sheridan tossed his head with a grin which, Chamberlain felt, "seemed to say that he didn't care much for himself, or perhaps for me," and promised to go to the rear--and then dashed off to a sector where the fire was even hotter.

Finally the line was formed as Sheridan wanted it. In a boggy woodland, heavy smoke clouding the last of the sunlight, Sheridan looked down the shifting mass of soldiers, turned in the saddle, and called: "Where's my battle flag?" Up came his color-bearer. Sheridan took the flag from him, raised it high over his head, and went trotting along the front. The line surged forward and got up to the Rebel works, Sheridan put his horse over the breastworks, and the infantry went over in a riot of yelling jubilant men--and the Rebel flank was broken once and for all, and the men of the V Corps fought their way down the length of Pickett's battle line taking prisoners by the score and the hundred.

By this time Warren had Crawford's errant division far around to the Rebel rear, rounding up fugitives and cutting off the line of retreat, and Warren sent his chief of staff over to tell Sheridan about it. This officer found Sheridan on the battlefield and trotted up proudly. But the great fury of battle was on Sheridan. Warren's corps had been late getting to Dinwiddie and it had been late getting into position at Five Forks, and when it attacked two thirds of it had gone astray and Warren had gone with it; Sheridan did not in the least care whether the reasons for all of this were good or bad, and he did not want to receive any more reports from General Warren.

"By God, sir, tell General Warren he wasn't in that fight!" he shouted. The chief of staff was dumfounded. Warren had been doing his best, no one in the Army of the Potomac ever spoke that way about a distinguished corps commander--but Sheridan was clearly implacable, his face black, his eyes flashing. The officer managed to say at last that he disliked to deliver such a message verbally--might he take it down in writing?

"Take it down, sir!" barked Sheridan. "Tell him by God he was not at the front!"

Warren's man rode away, stunned. The next to come up was General Griffin, ranking division commander in the V Corps--Regular Army to his fingertips, rough and tough and gifted with a certain magnetism--a man, in fact, cut somewhat after the Sheridan pattern. Bluntly, Sheridan hailed him and told him that he was now in command of the V Corps. Then he sent a courier to find Warren and deliver a written message relieving him of his command and ordering him to report to General Grant at headquarters.

Pickett's force was wholly wrecked, by now, with the front broken in and victorious Yankees charging in from the flank and rear to make

ruin complete. Yet Sheridan still was not satisfied. The enemy must be annihilated. all escape must be cut off, that railroad line must be broken, no one must relax or pause for breath as long as there was anything still to be accomplished. . . .He was in a little clearing in the forest, directly behind what had been the main Confederate line, and through the clearing went the road that led from Five Forks to the Southside Railroad, the railroad Lee had to protect if his army was to live; and just then there came up to Sheridan some now unidentified officer of rank, to report triumphantly that his command was in the Rebel rear and had captured five guns.

Sheridan gave him a savage greeting:

"I don't care a damn for their guns, or you either, sir! What I want is that Southside Railway!"

The sun was just disappearing over the treetops, and the clearing was dim with a smoky twilight. Many soldiers were in and about the road through the clearing, their weapons in their hands, conscious of victory and half expecting to be told that they had done a great thing and were very fine fellows. Sheridan turned to face them, and he suddenly stood up in his stirrups, waving his hat, his face as black as his horse, and in a great voice he roared:

"I want you men to understand we have a record to make before that sun goes down that will make Hell tremble!"

He waved toward the north, toward the position of the railroad, and he cried: "I want you there!"

He turned and rode to the north. Meeting Griffin and Ayres and Chamberlain, he called to them: "Get together all the men you can, and drive on while you can see your hand before you!"

While the officers formed the men into ordered ranks and prepared to move on, a pale, slight man rode up to Sheridan and spoke to him quietly: General Warren, the written order clutched in his hand, asking Sheridan if he would not reconsider the order that wrecked a soldier's career.

"Reconsider, hell!" boomed Sheridan. "I don't reconsider my decisions! Obey the order!" Silently, Warren rode off in the dusk, and Sheridan went on trying to organize a force to break through to the railroad.

Actually, no more could be done that night. No more needed to be done. To all practical purposes, Pickett's force had been wiped out. Thousands of prisoners were on their way back to the provost marshal's stockades, and there were so many captured muskets that Sheridan's

pioneers were using armloads of them to corduroy the roads. Some of the Rebel cavalry elements which had got away were swinging about to rejoin Lee's army, but the infantry that had escaped was beaten and disorganized, drifting off to the north and west, effectively out of the war. Sheridan could have the railroad whenever he wanted to march his men over to it, and he might just as well do it tomorrow as tonight because the force which might have stopped him had been blown to bits. There was no need to put exhausted troops on the road before morning, and in the end even Sheridan came to see it. Cavalry and infantry went into bivouac where they were.

Around General Griffin's campfire the new commander of the V Corps talked things over with division and brigade commanders. These men were deeply attached to Warren. They felt that his troubles today had mostly been caused by General Crawford, and it seemed very hard that Warren should be broken for mistakes and delays which had not, after all, affected the outcome of the battle. This was the first time in the history of the Army of the Potomac that a ranking commander had been summarily fired because his men had been put into action tardily and inexpertly. Sheridan had been cruel and unjust--and if that cruel and unjust insistence on driving, aggressive promptness had been the rule in this army from the beginning, the war probably would have been won two years earlier. . . .

As the generals talked, a stocky figure stepped into the light of the campfire--Sheridan himself.

He was in a different mood, now, the battle fury quite gone, and he spoke very gently: If he had been harsh and demanding with any of them that day he was sorry, and he hoped they would forgive him, for he had not meant to hurt anyone. But--"you know how it is; we had to carry this place, and I was fretted all day until it was done." So there was this apology for hot words spoken in the heat of action, and there was the general's thanks for hard work well done; and then Sheridan went away, and the generals gaped into the dark after him. General Chamberlain, who was one of the circle, reflected that "as a rule, our corps and army commanders were men of brains rather than magnetism"; but Sheridan, now--well, "we could see how this voice and vision, this swing and color, this vivid impression on the senses, carried the pulse and will of men."

(From *ibid.*, pp. 350-358.)

General Warren's name was eventually cleared, although he remained understandably bitter to his death.

INDIAN FIGHTING

The challenge of leadership in the Indian fighting following the American Civil War was a complex one. The units demanded tactical competence, leadership by example, knowledge of terrain, and perseverance of their leaders; in return the soldiers gave loyalty and a full measure of devotion and course to the good leader. Most of the units which enjoyed good leadership also had a high degree of cohesion, as leaders and men were together for long periods and grew to know and trust one another. All soldiers were volunteers and many were veterans of the Civil War.

George Alexander Forsyth had enlisted at the outbreak of the Civil War when he was twenty-three years old. Commissioned a First Lieutenant five months later, he was brevetted Brigadier General for actions at Opequon and Middletown, Dinwiddie Courthouse, and Five Forks. Aggressive, decisive, tactically competent, and cool under fire, it is obvious that he learned from his mentor, Philip Sheridan. He was thirty years old at the time of the action described below.

At about 4 o'clock on the afternoon of September 16, 1868, a party of 50 men led by Major George A. Forsyth rode through a ravine and into the flood plain of the Arikaree River in what now is eastern Colorado. They were all picked hands, wise to the frontier, traveling light on forced march from Fort Wallace, Kansas. Each carried his own gear--a blanket, a canteen, rations for seven days, a Spencer repeating rifle with 140 rounds of ammunition and a Colt's Army revolver with 30 rounds. Four pack mules bore the company's medical supplies and 4,000 supplementary rounds of ammunition for the rifles.

Forsyth was a young man with thick brown hair and a round, boyish face that belied his aggressive nature. He had enlisted in a Chicago regiment of dragoons in 1861 and had risen from private to brevet brigadier general during the Civil War to become the trusted aide of the Union cavalry hero General Philip Sheridan. Now Sheridan, his old commanding officer, was on the frontier as commander of the largest enclave of a vast administrative unit designated as the Division of the Missouri. And George Forsyth, reduced to the permanent rank of major as the Army shrank rapidly after the war, was still functioning as his aide.

Their job was anything but a sinecure. Indian warriors had been striking all over the Great Plains that year. War parties, many of them Sioux and Cheyenne, had burned settlements, wagon trains, ranches, stage stations, telegraph stations. Sheridan wanted to retaliate. Like every Western soldier blooded in the Civil War's great battles, the general was angered and frustrated by the guerrilla tactics of the Plains Indians. Superb horsemen, they struck where they chose and then drifted away across the Plains with lookouts posted over their

back trails. If pursuit came they broke into smaller parties, moving onto stony ground where they left no tracks. Cavalrymen frequently rode their horses to death in the hopeless chase.

Forsyth had offered a solution, proposing to assemble a small force of selected men who could travel light and fast, hunt out the Indians and force them to fight. Sheridan had given his consent to this plan, and now Forsyth and his men, 10 days out of the post, were about to make contact with the enemy. They had been following an Indian trail so heavily beaten it was clear that several villages were on the move ahead. Awed at the apparent number of the enemy, a scout had suggested that Forsyth turn back. "Enlisted to fight Indians, didn't you?" the young leader snapped, and the column rode on. Later that afternoon they turned off the trail and halted in the valley of the Arikaree River.

The valley floor was broad, with rich, high grass. The riverbed was about 140 yards wide but sandy and almost dry at that time of year. A shallow stream coursed through its center, parting to pass a small island perhaps 60 yards long by 20 wide covered with scrubby alder, willow wild plum and a single cottonwood.

Twelve miles upriver, the Indian encampment--made up largely of Sioux but also including a number of Cheyennes and Arapahos--was in turmoil, for a group of Sioux warriors had just galloped into the middle of the village to announce that the soldiers were approaching. As Forsyth had anticipated, however, his force was small enough to entice the more numerous Indians into battle. The warriors collected their fighting ponies and began dressing and painting themselves for war. Among them was one of the greatest of all Indian fighting men. Known as Bat to the other Indians, he was a Cheyenne, large and muscular, with a broad, handsome face dominated by a distinctive hooked nose. To the whites he was known as Roman Nose and his commanding presence in the villages, and Forsyth's on the soldiers' side, ensured that what might have been a skirmish would instead become a deadly battle.

Thinking that they had not yet been detected, Forsyth's men made camp. But the Indians were already moving toward them, scouts ranging ahead to find the soldiers' exact location. At dawn the next day, the warriors were poised on the bluffs overlooking the camp, ready to attack. They numbered about 600, and in the typically individualistic style of the Plains warriors they were disorganized and undisciplined. The engagement began when eight overcager young Indians made an ineffectual attempt to stampede the Army horses. The warriors' war cries alerted Forsyth, and pickets managed to turn back the impulsive attack while the main body of soldiers hastily saddled their mounts.

The enemy seemed everywhere. Scanning the fighting ground, Forsyth perceived that the ravine through which they had entered the

valley was not yet closed off, and he scented a trap. From the other direction he saw the first charge--dozens of mounted warriors coming down the dry riverbed on the gallop. Again pickets drove off the attackers, while Forsyth ordered his men to break for the small island that lay just across the river shallows. They made it, and as they brought their horses into a circle and tied them to bushes, forming a living barricade, one of the men cried, "Don't let's stay here and be shot down like dogs!" Forsyth drew his pistol and declared that he would kill any man who tried to leave. Years later, Indians who were there said the move to the island saved Forsyth; they had expected to run down the soldiers one by one on open ground.

As the men tried frantically to dig rifle pits in the sand using tin plates and hunting knives, Forsyth sent three marksmen squirming through the tall grass toward the point of the island that faced the charge. By this time the Indian horde was very close. Lightly armed, firing as they charged, they intended to ride over the island and destroy the soldiers at close quarters. Forsyth remained standing. He moved calmly among his men, surveying their positions and encouraging them until the men themselves insisted that he take cover. When at last the charge hit the point of the island, the soldiers opened such heavy fire from their repeating Spencers that at the last moment the wall of horsemen broke in the center, parted and surged down both sides of the island and beyond it.

The Indians wheeled and, after riding around the island firing at the soldiers, regrouped and charged again. Again the repeating rifle fire broke them, this time at a greater distance. Though Forsyth and several others were hit in those first violent assaults, the fight was just beginning. Many of the Indians were still upriver, waiting as their horses milled nervously. As Forsyth was to learn later, the renowned warrior Roman Nose had not yet entered the fight--for a strange reason: Roman Nose was convinced that he would die if he fought that day. The great Cheyenne believed that he possessed a magical invulnerability to the arrows and bullets of his enemies, and in fact he had often ridden casually through heavy fire without being hit. This supposed invulnerability was thought to stem from a sacred bonnet he wore into battle, and the bonnet's power, in turn, was dependent on the observance of an elaborate set of taboos. But by chance, as Forsyth's men were approaching, Roman Nose had violated one of the taboos and there had been no time for the elaborate purification rites necessary to restore the bonnet's power. As a result, he had held back from the battle. However, when an Indian with the singularly appropriate name of White Contrary accused him of cowardice, he elected to lead the next charge.

His appearance on his great chestnut war pony had a galvanic effect on the other warriors. It unified them in a way rare among Indians in combat. With Roman Nose in the fore, they galloped in a

boiling mass down on the little island where Forsyth's men huddled in their shallow rifle pits. The young officer ordered his men to stop firing and reload, six in the magazine, one in the chamber, and hold for orders. They would fire by volleys, and none of them would have time to reload.

Forsyth saw the huge warrior in the lead. Later he remembered that the man was shaking a heavy rifle effortlessly over his head with one hand. The major waited until the rumbling wave of horsemen was a bare 50 yards away and then, grunting with pain, lifted himself and shouted, "Now!"

The volley crashed like cannon fire, and bullets cut down men and horses. But the wave of warriors was not even faintly slowed. The second and third and fourth volleys felled more riders and horses. Those behind leaped over them. The fifth volley staggered the charge, and Forsyth remembered that Roman Nose turned on the chestnut and rallied his men. By the sixth volley Roman Nose was over the position at which the hidden marksmen lay. One of them fired point blank; the ball struck Roman Nose in the back just above his hips and ranged up through his body. The impact of the shot knocked both Roman Nose and his horse down in the shallow water. When his warriors saw their great leader fall, mortally wounded by the shot, the charge faltered and passed by.

On the island, Forsyth turned to the chief scout. "Can they do better than that?" he asked. The man shook his head. In all his years on the Plains, it was the most violent charge he had ever seen. Forsyth's second-in-command, Lieutenant Frederick Beecher, for whom the island eventually was named, lurched toward the major. "I have my death wound, general," the young man said, then collapsed. "Good night," he whispered as he died. The surgeon was dying, too, with a bullet in his forehead. Five others were dead or mortally wounded, and 16 more had been hit. Forsyth had been struck three times: he had taken a glancing shot on the head, his left shin was shattered, and a ball in his right thigh was lodged against the femoral artery.

The Indians continued to charge sporadically, and riflemen on the surrounding bluffs held Forsyth's men under siege for more than a week. The wounded soldiers suffered terribly: Forsyth's thigh wound was extremely painful, and on the fourth day of the siege, he asked his men to cut the bullet out. They refused, fearful that a slip of the knife would nick the artery and kill him. Forsyth asked for his saddlebags, took out his razor, told two men to hold open the wound and, with nothing to deaden the pain, carefully carved his own flesh until the bullet dropped free.

Meanwhile two pairs of scouts had slipped away from the island to try to get help. The first pair left the night after Roman Nose's attack, sneaking through the Indian lines and walking backward so their

tracks would look like those of Indian moccasins heading toward the island. Once in the clear, they made for Fort Wallace 110 miles distant, walking by night and hiding by day. Two days later Forsyth dispatched the second pair. Somehow all four men managed to elude the Indians and alert a relief force. When the fresh column of troops arrived at the island, Forsyth's men had been reduced to eating the putrid meat of horses that had been killed in the fighting.

The story of Forsyth, standing fast on Beecher's Island as the savage warriors thundered down upon him, was told and retold in barracks and around campfires all across the Plains. Accounts of it filled the press and the popular histories of the time. The fight itself was not strategically significant; yet the Battle of Beecher's Island remained one of the most celebrated in the annals of the Plains. In Forsyth, soldiers all over the West saw their own self-image as Indian fighters: outnumbered and surrounded, but steadfast under fire, heroic under prolonged siege. And although only nine Indians had died that day at Beecher's Island, Forsyth's men did not know it; they boasted of having slain hundreds--and soldiers everywhere were proud.

(From Time-Life Books, The Soldiers and the Old West, pp. 19-24.)

Forsyth's First Sergeant in this action had also been a Brevet Brigadier General in the Civil War, an indication of how the army had shrunk since 1865. Forsyth was again brevetted for this action at Arikaree Fork, sometimes called the Battle of Beecher's Island.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

It goes without saying that not all leaders of the period were either good or successful. In the miserable conditions of soldiering on the plains, the martinets and petty tyrants among the leaders took a toll in the morale of their units, causing the soldiers to desert or turn to alcohol or other diversions. The diary and letters of Albert Barnitz, a Civil War veteran and junior officer serving in Custer's cavalry, gives some details of this life. This is a letter to his wife of 15 May 1867:

Things are becoming very unpleasant here. General Custer is very injudicious in his administration, and spares no effort to render himself generally obnoxious. I have utterly lost all the little confidence I ever had in his ability as an officer--and all admiration for his character, as a man, and to speak the plain truth I am thoroughly disgusted with him! He is the most complete example of a petty tyrant that I have ever seen. You would be filled with utter amazement, if I were to give you a few instances of his cruelty to the men, and discourtesy to the officers, as an illustration of "what manner of man" he is!--but I forbear, for the present, any further allusion to him. Of course, what I write in regard to him is for yourself. I do not care, for the present, to have it attain any publicity--but Jennie, it is very discouraging to an officer who is disposed, upon all occasions, to do his duty faithfully, and I might almost say with "religious zeal!"

If General Custer is to remain long in command of the regiment, as now appears probable, I don't know how matters will result. I fear that it will prove an additional inducement for me to resign. I will not do so rashly however, nor without a careful comparison of all the relative advantages and disadvantages of being in or out of the service. But, indeed, I fear that the arbitrary method pursued by Genl Custer will be a source of such constant and unmitigated annoyance, that an officer cannot long serve under him with any degree of credit, or with proper feelings of self-respect. I know that what I say will worry you a little--and perhaps I should not have written it, but I feel that it will be an additional inducement for you to remain quietly "in the States" and await the result! . . . I try to be contented, and abide in hope, and if I could only feel some of your happiness--present and prospective--I would be measurably contented, for the time. I am well--and not entirely despondent!--nor without plenty of sympathy!--We are "all in the same box!"--as Genl. Custer is--well I will not resort to a simile! but simply observe that he is "no respecter of persons!"

(From Robert M. Utley, ed., Life in Custer's Cavalry, pp. 50ff.)

His journal entry of two days later gives further details:

Today Genl. Custer required Capt. West, Officer of the Day, to have the heads of six men (of Cos. "E" & "H", 7th Cav.) shaved close to the scalp on one side of a line drawn over the head from the base of the nose to the occipital bone, (while that on the other side of the head was left untouched!) and in this condition the men were then transported through all the streets of the camp, to their own great humiliation, and the exceeding mortification, disgrace, and disgust of all right-minded officers and men in camp. The men were afterwards returned to close confinement. Now all this shocking spectacle (no new thing in camp either) was occasioned simply by the fact that these men, impelled by hunger, had gone to the Post, half a mile distant, without a pass, in order to purchase some canned fruit, with which they immediately returned, not having been absent quite three quarters of an hour, and not absent from roll call, or any duty! The scurvey is very bad in camp now, not less than 75 (seventy-five) cases being reported, and all for want of a proper diet, and the men are perfectly crazy for canned fruits or fresh vegetables, a fact which makes the infliction of such a punishment for an offense of this nature, if offense it may be called, additionally atrocious. No man but an incarnate fiend could take pleasure in such an abuse of authority, and I have greatly missed my guess if the "Brevet Major General commanding" is not fast losing whatever little influence for good he may have once possessed in the Regiment, and if he does not moreover eventually come to grief, as a consequence of his tyrannical conduct. Charles Clarke, a Bugler, of my company, was ordered by the officer of the day, to perform the office of Barber in the foregoing cases, an additional outrage. Thus does one bad example lead to others.

(From *ibid.*, pp. 51ff.)

Obviously, such conditions of morale demanded the most from the junior leaders in combat. One account of Barnitz to his wife describing an action which he led gives an idea of the leadership challenge they faced:

I will proceed to give you some account of quite a desperate little fight which I have had with the Indians, and which our citizen friends persist in dignifying by the name of a "battle." Indeed the soldiers of the garrison are very much impressed with its magnitude, and it was doubtless the most extensive engagement that has occurred for some time, on these plains, if I except the [Fetterman] massacre near Fort Phil. Kearney [Wyoming, December 21, 1866], which was more an ambushade than a fight.

You must know then that upon my arrival here I found the small garrison under some apprehension of a renewed attack from the Indians, and it was not deemed prudent to be even a few hundred yards from the fort or our own encampment, which was only a short distance from here, without arms, lest the Indians should suddenly make a dash, and we be found like the foolish virgins! Well, not having any grain for my horses, I was accustomed to send them all to graze, at a point about two miles down the stream, in the valley, posting videttes on the high ground, at a mile distant on either hand, trusting that in the event of a dash by the Indians, and an attempted stampede, the mounted men about 20 in number, whom I kept among them, armed with their carbines, might be able to move them in to the Post before the Indians could get among them. I was accustomed to send them out after breakfast, keeping them fastened to a picket-rope, or lariatted near at night, with a strong guard among them. Well, on the morning of Wednesday, June 26, just as I was about starting to breakfast, I saw a commotion at the Post, men running to and fro, and emerging from their quarters and tents with arms, and at once mistrusting the presence of Indians, I ordered the men to seize their arms, and run out and bring in the horses (which were lariatted near where they could get a little grass), and in the meantime I learned that the Indians were approaching in considerable force, and that a large party were already running off the mules and stage horses from the Ponds-creek Stage Station. In less than a minute my horses were coming in, and I at once ordered them to be saddled, and the command formed for action, and mounting my own horse, which had been quickly saddled (the sorrel--the vicious one you remember!) and accompanied by [Edward] Botzer, one of my Trumpeters, I rode out to the North West, to the high ground to reconnoitre, directing Serg't [Francis S.] Gordon to form the command, mount, and follow. I had not ridden more than half a mile, and completed some hasty observations (discovering small parties of Indians on a ridges, all around the horizon to the west, and north, and a cloud of dust arising from the direction of the Stage Station), when I saw my company approaching, at a gallop, and also a small party of cavalry coming out from the Post to join me. As my troop came up, I deployed the 1st Platoon, under Serg't Gordon, my 1st Sergeant, as Skirmishers, ordering him to proceed at a steady

gallop, keeping the horses well in hand, towards the North-West, the apparent centre of the enemy's line, and to direct his movements towards a group of Indians among whom was one mounted on a white horse, and upon approaching sufficiently near, to charge as foragers, cautioning the men to swing to the left in the charge, and endeavor to head off a force which I now saw attempting to escape from the station. I directed the detachment from Company I to cooperate with the skirmishers, and the 2nd Platoon (under Serg't [Josiah] Haines, my Quartermaster Sergeant) to follow in reserve, at 200 paces in rear of the Skirmishers; just as I had completed my formation, and was moving forward in fine style-- (the whole formation being done while going forward at a gallop,) Serg't Gordon was thrown from his horse, and considerably bruised, the horse having stepped into a prairie-dog hole, and he was left behind, attempting to follow on foot, until the horse could be caught,--the horse however (a superb animal, one of the finest on the plains) made directly for the Indians, and fearing that he would fall into the hands of the enemy, I started in pursuit, and after repeated efforts, succeeded in catching the bridle, and bringing him to a stand, and sending him back to the Sergeant. In the meantime, seeing that the Indians from the Station were likely to get past my Skirmish line, before it could reach them, I sent Botzer to Sergeant Haines, with directions for the 2nd Platoon to bear more to the right, and with a few men who were somewhat dispersed, I struck myself toward the center--midway between the skirmish line and the reserve, which had now come up abreast of it. It was just at this juncture, and as the skirmish line were becoming engaged with the Indians, that I sorely missed the absence of Sergeant Gordon, who had not yet come up--(he being far in the rear by the time his horse was caught,) for most unfortunately Serg't Hamlin, of Co. "I", was the senior non-commissioned officer with the line--the skirmishers--and no sooner had the Indians found themselves too closely pressed, than being reinforced by another party from behind a ridge, and as their only remaining course, they turned suddenly upon my line, and came literally sailing in, uttering their peculiar Hi!--Hi!--Hi! and terminating it with the war-whoop--their ponies, gaily decked with feathers and scalp-locks, tossing their proud little heads high in the air, and looking wildly from side to side, as their riders poured in a rapid fire from their repeating arms, or sending their keen arrows with fearful accuracy and force. I had no sooner seen the turn that affairs were taking, than dreading lest the skirmish line should turn in flight, and thus be at the mercy of their savage pursuers, than I shouted to the men who were with me to hasten to the support of the skirmish line, and signalling to Sergeant Haines, who (through his constitutional stupidity!) was bearing too much to the right--(though warmly engaged, and fighting with great gallantry) to do the same, I dashed with all speed towards the skirmish line, but before I could reach it, the men began to waver, and urged by Sergeant Hamlin to retreat, (who himself made off at all speed followed by a few of his men,) the men began to turn about, and fall back in confusion, nor could I reach them in time to prevent so direful a result, although by signalling them to turn about and face the enemy,

I succeeded in inducing some of the most intrepid ones to again confront the enemy, and afford another moments precious time for the reserve platoon (now in entire confusion however) to move towards a concentration with us,--but it was only by singling out individuals, one or two men here and there from among the confused mass of retreating men, and inducing each to turn and fire one or two shots, or beat back the diabolical fiends with the sabre, that I was at length enabled to check the pursuit long enough to measurably concentrate my men. Sergeant Gordon now fortunately reached us, and with his assistance, though not until after a good deal of desultory fighting, I was enabled to effectively check our pursuers, and drive them back beyond the hills. I now placed Serg't Hamlin in arrest, and ordered him to the post, hastily reformed my command, and dismounting a portion of the men, determined to hold the ground at all hazards, until an ambulance, for which I at once sent, could come from the post, and remove the dead and wounded. Going meanwhile to the summit of a ridge, I took a deliberate look at the fiends, who were drawn up in fine order, upon the summit of another ridge beyond, busily engaged in reloading their arms, and preparing, as I supposed, to renew the fight. With my glass I was able to distinguish their hideous countenances, and the barbaric magnificence of their array, as they sat with their plumed lances, their bows, and shields, and their gleaming weapons, only awaiting apparently for the signal of their chief to make another descent! But their leading chief, "Roman Nose" had already (as we believe) been killed in the fight, and the "Dog Soldiers" (as the Cheyennes style themselves) had paid dearly in the encounter, and so they were not eager to renew the onset. I now returned to my command, advanced a dismounted skirmish line to the north and west, to cover and protect the horses, and waited patiently for the arrival of an ambulance, and removal of the wounded, and all the dead whose bodies could then be found, when I again moved forward, with a part of my men dismounted to the point where I had last seen the enemy, and a mile beyond, but not the head of even a solitary Indian was anywhere visible above the ridges, and not a pony track was visible on the hard dry ground of the hot prairie, and so I at length returned to the Post, and made arrangements for the burial of the dead, visited the wounded in the hospital, and put things in proper shape for a repulse of the Indians, should they return in force, and make an attempt to capture the post. The dead were buried with martial honors, all my own company, Genl. Wright and others of the surveying party, the troops of the garrison, myself and all the officers being in the procession. Parties of laborers, and occasional details of soldiers have been working at intervals ever since, digging rifle pits, and we now have things in a very fair shape for defense, should the Indians made their appearance. I cannot say that I deem such an event probable, and yet it is well for one always to be on the safe side. [Pvt. John G.] Hummell was wounded severely--a bullet wound through the thigh, and a lance thrust in the side. But the Surgeon thinks he will recover. Sergeant [Fred-erick] Wylliams--the one who fixed the tin protection to our stove pipe,--and who was such a gentlemanly soldier, was killed. The Indians

stripped, scalped, and horribly mutilated his body. I dare not tell you how fearfully! He had fought bravely but had incautiously become separated from the command, and was surrounded by overwhelming numbers. The Indians stripped, or partially stripped all the dead whose bodies fell within their reach. They did this almost instantly. When [Charles] Clarke, the chief Bugler was killed and fell from his horse (while following me from the centre across to the skirmish line--a very hot ride, by the way, for us all!) a powerful Indian was seen to reach down, as he rode at full speed, seize the body with one hand, and jerk it across his pony, strip off the clothes in an instant, dash out the brains with a tomahawk, and hasten on for another victim!--But I would only sicken you with additional details of the fight. My own scalp seems to have been in considerable request--although not by any means ornamental as a trophy. Corporal [Prentice G.] Harris says that he saw an Indian, who appeared to be a chief, swing a pole which he carried, with a bunch of feathers tied to a string, on the end, rapidly around his head five or six times, and then point it at me, when instantly half a dozen Indians started for me, each firing a number of shots, but I was not touched. One Indian dashed towards me, as I rode from the centre to the left, and fired several shots at me over his pony's head, and then when opposite me turned, and rode parallel with me, on my right side, lying lengthwise on his pony, and firing from under his pony's neck, his left arm being thrown over the pony's neck, and grasping his rifle! The shots came very close! But I was just then too much concerned for the fate of my command to pay much heed to his firing. I only pointed my revolver at him, a few times, as if I was about to fire, and thus disconcerted him a little, I suppose; but I was reserving my shots for a more favorable opportunity, and Oh! Darling! had I not been successful in checking the tide of adversity, and driving back our pursuers, your eyes would have been tearful when tidings from this far land had reached you, apprising you of the dread result!--for it would have been scarcely possible for any one to have reached the Post--the distance being so great, and the Indian ponies so fleet! The men would have fallen one by one, and possibly no one would have escaped to tell the tale! But dear Jennie, do not be fearful on my account hereafter, more than formerly, will you? I will always do my duty, of course, faithfully, and fearlessly, and leave the result with the All-Wise Giver of Life; and should it be my fortune to fall in some future engagement, console yourself with the reflection that I am not dead, but only transferred to a higher and nobler sphere of existence, where I will await your coming, with tender and fond solicitude, as the one dear being without whom I would not choose to live!

(From *ibid.*, pp. 68-73.)

WORLD WAR I

World War I proved to be the worst kind of trial by fire for combat leaders of all ranks. For the lieutenants and captains, it became a routine of trying to train their units to tactical and technical proficiency, to prevent disease in the miserable conditions of the trenches and to preserve morale in the face of the knowledge that when the units went "over the top" they would quite probably cease to exist in a matter of minutes or hours because of casualties.

In the account of British action at the Somme which follows, one gets a feel for the awesome tasks these leaders had to perform, and at the end of the account a superb example of leadership by example, coolness under fire, and calmly analytical assessment of the situation--coupled with uncommon good sense.

The weight of fire overhead, from both field-guns and machine-guns, kept attackers and defenders alike in the trenches. The trenches, nevertheless, gave them access to each other, being part of a continuous system or grid, fire trenches running in one direction, communication trenches athwart them in another. The two sides, however, would rarely see each other, because both fire and communication trenches were 'traversed'--dug in angular kinks to deny an attacker the chance of firing down the whole length of the trench and to localize the blast of any shell which fell into it. In these circumstances, friend and foe could approach very close without being able, though aware of each others presence, to do each other much harm in the conventional way. An impasse could result--to be resolved sometimes by an individual or group on one side or the other deciding to 'go out over the top' or 'go above ground'. Sergeant Gurney of D Company was killed doing that during the initial advance, jumping up the side of the trench to get at some Germans who were holding up the attack round a corner. The normal method of resolving the impasse, however, was by 'bombing', the throwing of a hand-grenade over the top of the traverse, and running round to arrive just after it exploded. If played seriously, it was an extremely dangerous game, for one could run into the explosion of one's own grenade, or into the fire of an unwounded enemy soldier, or into the grenade of someone bombing from the next traverse up. Equally, it could be nearly a sham combat, with the two sides sticking prudently to their own traverses and the grenades falling harmlessly in the bay between them. Here in the trenches which the London Scottish had captured it became something else: a static attritional affair, the Scots having blown in several sections of trench around them, using explosives brought by accompanying Royal Engineers, and so having enclosed themselves in an earthwork stockade. Inside it they ought to have been secure and could have expected eventually to have the section of trench they had captured incorporated in the British system on the other side of no-man's-land by new digging. Several circumstances militated against this outcome: they were overlooked from three sides; the trenches had been so knocked about by the British bombardment that the occupants

were exposed to fire in many places; the Germans had artillery available to bombard them from close range, and fresh infantry to deliver counter-attacks; the barrage in no-man's-land prevented either supplies or reinforcements from crossing. On the far side, the London Scots' commanding officer, who had been Left Out of Battle, became aware of his companies' plight, and got together a relief party. It set off in three groups between 9 and 10 a.m., each burdened with bandoliers of ammunition and boxes of bombs. Only three of the fifty-nine who started got through, and though this does not mean that all the rest were hit, some presumably deciding to take shelter in shell-holes, the figures do testify to the weight of fire which the Germans were laying on and over the London Scots' position. Two of the four company commanders were by then out of action and, soon after 2 p.m. a third was killed. The burden of managing the defence now fell wholly upon the fourth, Captain Sparks. "The better to direct the fighting, he was often seen standing and moving on the unbroken ground between the trenches"--conduct which would have attracted admiration at Waterloo and, when displayed on a First World War battlefield, beggars powers of eulogy. His men, though less exposed, were steadily being wounded or killed by bomb-blast or sniping shots, and though his garrison was occasionally reinforced by refugees from even harder pressed battalions on his left flank--the Rangers, Kensingtons and Queen Victoria's--it was dwindling in strength. The men who were left were running out of ammunition fast and, like defenders of some imperial fortlet on the veldt or the Frontier, kept their rifles going throughout the hot afternoon with rounds extracted from the pouches of the casualties. By 4 p.m. Captain Sparks recognized that his tiny force, now under attack by thirteen German infantry companies from three different regiments, was about to go under. He sent the following message back across no-man's-land: "I am faced with this position. I have collected all bombs [grenades] and [cartridges] from casualties. Every one has been used. I am faced with three alternatives: (a) to stay here with such of my men as are alive and be killed. (b) to surrender to the enemy (c) to withdraw such of my men as I can. Either of these first two alternatives is distasteful to me. I propose to adopt the latter." Using discarded German rifles and ammunition, he and four N.C.O.s made a final stand in the German front trench while the other survivors escaped into no-man's-land. There most of them, including Sparks, hid until darkness fell and allowed them to regain the British lines. During the day, the London Scottish, which had numbered 856 at dawn, had been reduced by death or wounds to 266.

(From John Keegan, The Face of Battle, pp. 252-254.)

As one reads of the horrors of such meat-grinder battles as the Somme, two things stand out. First, the utter futility of the infantryman's task of attacking entrenched automatic weapons without supporting arms; and second, the magnificent bond between the leader and the led that these units enjoyed. As units attacked time after time over ground where they had seen other units

decimated or destroyed, the leaders continued to lead by example and exhort their men to advance. And time after time, until 60,000 British soldiers were casualties on the first day, until 420,000 were casualties four and a half months later, the soldiers and their units advanced to their deaths. One has to search for examples of individuals or units who failed to follow (until late in the war, when it became more common). That they can be found, with some searching, is not so strange as that they should be so rare.

These trench fights were the scenes of some very brave actions. C.S.M. Percy Chappell had been lucky getting across No Man's Land before the German barrage had fallen upon it but, at the far side, the battalion they were following, the 1st Rifle Brigade, was held up at the German wire and an indecisive bombing fight was taking place. Suddenly, a Rifle Brigade officer stood up and shouted, "Come on, lads. Let them have it!" and the whole line rose and charged the enemy trench. This resolute action made the Germans bolt and freed the Somersets from being pinned down in the open.

Just north of Fricourt, the 10th Green Howards were following a battalion of the Somerset Light Infantry. The Green Howards wavered as machine-guns sprayed the top of their trench. A company commander, Maj. Loudoun-Shand, jumped up onto the parapet and ran along urging his men forward, until he was hit and fell back into the trench. Even then, he insisted on being propped up and continued exhorting his men until he died. His heroism was recognized by the award of the second Victoria Cross of the day.

The lieutenant-colonels should have stayed in their own trenches, leaving their company and platoon commanders to lead the initial attack; no one could command a unit as big as a battalion in the confusion of No Man's Land. Indeed, many c.o.'s had been specially ordered not to take part in the attack; they were to join their troops only when the objectives had been taken. But the c.o.'s not so ordered to remain behind invariably attacked with their men because their feelings prevented them from taking the safer but more reasonable course of action.

Those who had survived the crossing of No Man's Land set up their H.Q.'s in the captured trenches.

(From Martin Middlebrook, First Day on the Somme: 1 July 1916, pp. 115, 116-117, 144.)

Tactical radio communications were not possible in the First World War until the advent of the tank. For the infantry on the Somme, communications were attempted by wire, quickly cut by artillery and impossible to keep

repaired, backed up by runners. That messages often failed to arrive at their intended destination should be no surprise, nor should the confusion caused by plans executed as a result of orders that were never received by some of the key personnel.

Lieut-Col. Reginald Bastard was one c.o. who suffered from this breakdown in communications. His mixed force in the German trenches, subjected to continuous counterattack, was being pressed back gradually and still there was no sign of reinforcements. Eventually his force was so weak that the survivors were forced out of the German trenches altogether and took cover near the German wire. The Lincolns c.o. left them there with orders to hold on, while he went to fetch more men; he was determined to continue the attack.

Bastard managed to get back to the British trenches without being hit but found that the fourth battalion in his brigade, from which he had expected support, had been ordered not to go over. He rounded up every fit man he could find from the other three battalions and ordered them to go with him to reinforce the party he had left near the German wire. One can imagine the feelings of these stragglers as they were ordered over the top again in the middle of the morning, but they had to obey the lieutenant-colonel's orders. Bastard led them out into No Man's Land but they did not get far. Accurate German fire caused heavy casualties and he was soon down to thirty men.

Reginald Bastard had been very fortunate personally, for many of the c.o.'s who had gone over the top had become casualties, the duties of leadership making them prominent targets for German marksmen. Those who survived did their best but eventually had to recognize the inevitable and take refuge in shell holes.

Those lieutenant-colonels who had remained in the British trenches knew they could do little to help their battalions pinned down in No Man's Land, but every instinct led them forward: "I was a field clerk with Colonel Machell and the adjutant. The previous day the c.o. had said, "If things go badly, I'll come up and see it through." Everyone was tense as no messages were received from the companies. The colonel was fidgeting and watching the progress of his men and eventually decided to go and lead them on himself but as soon as he left the trench he was shot through the head and killed. Then the adjutant was severely wounded as he leant over the colonel's body. The second in command had already been wounded. The c.o.'s batman, his bugler and two runners were all killed but I was only knocked over by a shell and stunned." (L/Cpl F. Allan, 11th Border) Within a few seconds this battalion had become completely leaderless.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

After Lieut-Col. Bastard's second attack, his brigade commander realized that any further attempts would be hopeless and decided that

no more were to be made. On receipt of these orders, Bastard crossed No Man's Land again, joined his men in their exposed positions by the German wire and gave instructions for the depleted force to withdraw. A captain from another battalion, wounded and sheltering in a nearby shell hole, watched their withdrawal. "I spent the next few hours in a shell hole, but from there actually saw a platoon of the Lincolns come back to our line. They came back in perfect formation." (Capt. K.E. Poyser, 8th K.O.Y.L.I. [King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry]) Even when retiring the Lincolns did things in style, for what the captain had seen was almost certainly Bastard's force withdrawing.

Reginald Bastard had now crossed No Man's Land four times under fire, besides spending some time fighting in the German trenches. He was extremely lucky to have come through unharmed. His story illustrates the determination of a good officer but, in the end, all his efforts and those of his men had been in vain.

(From *ibid.*, pp. 144-145, 147.)

Losses among the leaders were extremely high in such actions.

Among those c.o.'s who had gone on to the battlefield the casualty rate was high. "I was ordered to stay with Colonel Hind at all costs. When we got to the German wire I was absolutely amazed to see it intact, after what we had been told. The colonel and I took cover behind a small bank but after a bit the colonel raised himself on his hands and knees to see better. Immediately, he was hit in the forehead by a single bullet." (Pte A.H. Tomlinson, 1/7th Sherwood Foresters)

Another battalion commander to become a casualty was Lieut-Col. Sandys of the 2nd Middlesex who had worried so much about the German wire in Mash Valley. Some of his men had in fact managed to cross the 750 yards of No Man's Land and a few had briefly occupied the German trenches before being turned out. But the battalion's casualties had been enormous. Sandys had followed his men and was soon hit himself. His wound was not serious but he had to go to the rear.

Even brigade commanders became casualties. Brig.-Gen. C.B. Prowse was so frustrated as German opposition held up his brigade's attack, that he went forward himself to organize a fresh attempt and was badly wounded. One report says that he was hit while attacking a German machine-gun post with a walking stick, but his wound was actually caused by a shell. He was rushed to a Casualty Clearing Station but died soon afterwards.

In all, two brigade commanders, fifty battalion commanders and an R.A.M.C. lieutenant-colonel became casualties during the day. Of these, thirty-one, an unusually high proportion, lost their lives.

* * * * *

Toward the end of the war, American participation became a factor and the battlefield became a school for the Americans who would be the leaders in the Second World War. One such leader was Douglas MacArthur, Chief of Staff of the 42d "Rainbow" Division, a position not ordinarily requiring the individual holding it to exert much combat leadership. The narrative opens after a position of the 165th Infantry had been attacked by German artillery.

The 42nd Division retaliated on March 9 [1918] with three raids; MacArthur joined a company of the 168th Infantry which attacked German trenches in the Salient du Feys. He showed up before the assault wearing his turtle-neck sweater and muffler, carrying his riding crop, and refusing to accept a helmet or pistol. One soldier commented, "I couldn't figure what a fellow dressed like that could be doin' out there. When I found out who he was, you could have knocked me over with a feather." Much to the disappointment of most of the participating units of the 42nd, the 67th Field Artillery had laid down such a devastating barrage that the Germans had evacuated most of the forward trenches before the Americans attacked. In the Salient du Feys, however, the 168th Infantry ran into a hornet's nest of machine guns. That MacArthur was not along just "for the show" was attested by Menoher's later evaluation of his role: "On this occasion, in the face of the determined and violent resistance of an alert enemy, he lent actual advice on the spot to the unit commanders and by his supervision of the operations not only guaranteed its success, but left with the entire division the knowledge of the constant attention of their leaders to their problems in action, and the sense of security which his wise and courageous leadership there impressed on the engaged companies." For his part in the action at Salient du Feys, MacArthur received the Distinguished Service Cross, the citation noting that "his coolness and conspicuous courage aided materially" in the success of the operation.

(From D. Clayton James, The Years of MacArthur: 1880-1941, pp. 158-159.)

By July 1918, at the height of the Ludendorff offensives, the 42d Division was engaged in heavy fighting about twenty miles east of Rheims, near the village of Souain.

The fighting near Souain was the first large-scale combat in which MacArthur had ever been engaged. Although he might have had good excuses, as divisional chief of staff, to remain well behind the main line, he was usually found where the fighting was fiercest and calm, inspiring leadership was most needed. Staff planning, its spadework well prepared by him in advance, did not seem to suffer when he was absent from headquarters during the fighting. Menoher later remarked, "MacArthur is the bloodiest fighting man in this army. I'm afraid we're going to lose him sometime, for there's no risk of battle that any soldier is called upon to take that he is not liable to look up and see MacArthur at his side." On Menoher's recommendation he was awarded his second Silver Star.

(From *ibid.*, pp. 180-181.)

At the end of the month, MacArthur was made acting commander of the 84th Brigade, although he would not have official orders until 6 August. Before the orders arrived, MacArthur was cited for more heroism for his personal reconnaissance after a deserter reported that the Germans were withdrawing.

. . . At 3:30 A.M., August 2, MacArthur, having heard "the rumbling of many vehicles on the move" along the German line opposite his brigade, took an aide and ventured into No Man's Land above Serpy. Except for occasional sniper fire and sporadic shell bursts, he found the area near the German lines disturbed only by "the moans and cries of wounded men," apparently forsaken by their retreating comrades. MacArthur estimated that he passed at least 2000 enemy corpses; stopping at some, he counted insignias of "six of the best German divisions." Once, in the light of a flare, he saw with alarm a German machine gun close by, pointed directly at him. When the crew did not fire, he crawled to the gun and discovered "they were dead, all dead--the lieutenant with shrapnel through his heart, the sergeant with his belly blown into his back, the corporal with his spine where his head should have been." About daybreak MacArthur and his aide made their way back into the American lines with the momentous news that the German front line was abandoned. Hurrying to divisional headquarters at Beauvarde, where he found Menoher and Liggett in conference, he told them of the withdrawal. As the generals hastily set about mapping plans for the pursuit, MacArthur, who had not slept for ninety-six hours, settled into a chair and fell into a deep slumber. Liggett looked at him sympathetically and said, "Well, I'll be damned! Menoher, you better cite him." MacArthur, awakening a short time later, learned that the division was already moving forward and he was to be the recipient of another Silver Star, his fourth.

(From *ibid.*, p. 189.)

* * * * *

Although Corporal Alvin York led only seven men, his example in the war is instructive both in his background and in his instinctively correct leadership.

By nightfall on October 8, 1918, the legend had already begun to snowball. The tall soldier became aware of this when he reported to the brigade commander in the woods near Chatel-Chehery, France.

"Well, York," the general said amiably, "I hear tell you've captured the whole German Army!"

The big, red-haired mountaineer from Tennessee mumbled, embarrassed at having been singled out. At that moment Corporal Alvin Cullen York of Pall Mall, Tennessee, a turkey-shooting marksman who was a lineal descendant of frontiersman Davy Crockett, wished desperately he was any place but in a general's command post.

Even in later years, when he had become accustomed to the acclaim the nation bestowed upon "Sergeant York," it always seemed somewhat incredible to him that his exploit should have been called by Marshal Foch of the French Army "the greatest thing accomplished by any soldier of all the armies." Or that it should have been referred to by Major General George B. Duncan, commander of the 82d Infantry Division in which York soldiered as "the most remarkable incident in the whole war."

An action near Hill 223 in the Chatel-Chahery sector brought York the Medal of Honor. He was promoted to sergeant several days after the incident, and was thereafter known as "Sergeant York" to countless millions of Americans.

But the true measure of York's greatness lay not in what he had accomplished in the physical sense; not in the astonishing revelation that he had singlehandedly outfought an entire German machine gun battalion; not in the fact that his keen eye and steady hand had cut down 22 German gunners; not in the boldness that had enabled him to take 35 enemy machine guns; nor even in the courage that enabled him to bluff 132 armed enemy soldiers into surrendering.

Far more difficult for Alvin York than storming the line of enemy machine guns was the inner battle he had been forced to fight. This was a terrible conflict of moral values that had precipitated a period of mental turmoil and anguish for York from the moment that he entered the military service as a drafted soldier in the United States Army.

York, in the beginning, was a conscientious objector. The first time he had received a notice that he was required to register for the draft, he scrawled "I don't want to fight" on the card, and returned it to the county draft board. Later on he formally listed himself as a conscientious objector by virtue of his membership in the Church of Christ in the Christian Union.

But the board ruled that this was not, in their opinion, "a well organized religious sect," and they declined Alvin's request to be excused from military service. He was ordered to report for induction into the Army. He appealed this decision, but again his petition was denied. He wrote to President Woodrow Wilson explaining his position. Wilson turned the letter over to the army and it got lost in the shuffle of wartime Washington. There was nothing for York to do but report for induction or be classified a draft-dodger.

Fear had nothing to do with York's dislike of fighting. Fear, as a matter of fact, was an emotion the mountaineer scarcely knew. Bearing arms in battle seemed to Alvin to be a violation of the principles of his church; and it was this sincere and deep-rooted belief that plagued York as he stripped off his civilian clothes and buttoned up the tunic of his olive-drab army uniform.

To some of his old acquaintances in Fentress County, York's stand as a conscientious objector seemed odd. Alvin's early background was not exactly of a God-fearing, church-going sort. As a young man, he had been quite a gay blade, with a considerable hankering for the powerful moonshine native to the section in which he grew up.

But those who knew him well had no doubts about York's sincerity. He had made a complete break with his old life, and had quit drinking, smoking, and running around. He studied the Bible for long hours, and he was determined to live the rest of his life by the rules of the Good Book. He became a leader in the Church of Christ in the Christian Union, a small sect with a considerable following among the mountain folk.

Alvin York, 6 feet tall, weighing 180 pounds, 29 years old, was at the prime of his life when he embarked upon his army career at Camp Gordon, Georgia. The 82d Infantry Division, to which York was assigned, was composed mostly of drafted men from Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee. Before it was sent overseas, its ranks were filled with recruits from the New England and Middle Atlantic States--hence its nickname, the "All American Division." York was assigned to the company with which he was destined to spend all of his eighteen months as a soldier--Company G, 328th Infantry Regiment.

The mountaineer, his body and muscles hardened from years of hunting, ploughing, and blacksmithing, was one of the most striking men in Captain E.C.B. Danforth's company. But the captain, a former Augusta, Georgia schoolteacher, was sorely troubled by York's steadfast conviction that he was "doing wrong" by being in the Army. Yet at the same time he had to admit that York was easily the outstanding recruit in the outfit. He could shoot, he carried himself well, he responded intelligently to orders, and, as a matter of fact, were it not for his conscientious objector's views, Danforth would have made him a noncom. But Danforth had questioned York repeatedly about his beliefs, and he knew that the Tennessean was convinced that in going to war he was breaking his faith.

One of their conversations concluded with York pouring out a torrent of words that troubled Danforth considerably. York told Danforth that he would go to France, he would continue to be a good soldier, he would continue to obey the orders that were given to him--and when the time came he would go into the trenches and shoot to kill. But he gravely warned Danforth, he would hold the captain responsible for the lives he had taken when he appeared before God in Heaven on Judgment Day.

Danforth's own feelings had become involved; but instead of simply attempting to get York out of his hair, he put the case before his battalion commander, Major George E. Buxton, a New Englander who, it turned out, knew the Bible as well as York did.

As Buxton listened to Danforth's account, he sensed that York was a man well worth salvaging if he could be made to listen. He felt that for all of the mountaineer's dedication to the principles of the sect to which he belonged, there was some nagging thought in back of the man's mind which would not let him play the passive role of a conscientious objector.

"Bring him to my hut tonight," he told Danforth. That night the three talked for a long time together. Danforth found himself mostly listening as Buxton and York warmly debated the moral issue, each quoting from the Scriptures to prove his point.

Buxton cited Matthew in the New Testament and Ezekiel in the Old. York replied in kind.

When Buxton drew upon, "He that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword," (Rev. 13:10) the private answered, "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Is. 2:4). Finally, the Major arose. He turned to Danforth. "I want you to send him home on furlough for two weeks." To York he said, "That will give you time to do some thinking and praying. If you then can find it in your heart to return with a free conscience, we will take you with us. If you cannot. . . I will see that you are let out."

York's torment continued during his two weeks back in the hills in the forks of the Wolf River. There was no one he could turn to, no one from whom to seek advice. It was something he had to solve by himself--and solve it he did, on the last day of his leave.

The next day he rejoined Company G, and told Captain Danforth that he had become convinced he could fight for his country without violating the precepts of his faith. From that day on York marched in the ranks with a light heart and clear mind, as the division traveled north to Camp Mills and Camp Upton in New York, and thence to the ports of embarkation.

The division fought that summer in Lorraine, where the lanky York earned corporal's stripes and command of an automatic rifle team. He had always been known as a good man on a squirrel or turkey shoot in his native Fentress County, and his phenomenal marksmanship on the front lines was soon the talk of his regiment. Then, in the fall, the 82d Division took part in the Meuse-Argonne offensive.

On October 7, 1918, the 82d, which had been held in reserve, was slipped into the I Corps (Liggett) line between the 1st and 28th Divisions. It was Pershing's intent that the three divisions should increase the pressure down the Aire Valley toward St. Juvin to pinch the Germans out of the northern extremity of the Argonne.

In conjunction with the 28th Division, the 82d slashed at the east flank of the Forest near the communications center of Chatel-Chehery. Meeting determined enemy resistance, it was only able to push its line forward one mile by nightfall.

General Pershing then planned to cut the vital road and rail lines by a co-ordinated infantry and artillery assault. During the night of October 7-8, the 2d Battalion of the 328th Infantry, including Company G in which Corporal York was a squad leader, pushed cross the Aire River, passed through the 1st Battalion which had taken Hill 223, and launched its attack at precisely 6 a.m. behind a rolling artillery barrage. The artillery was timed to creep ahead of the doughboys at the rate of 100 yards every three minutes until the troops were on the objective--the railroad.

Its initial thrust carried the battalion in which York was fighting about one mile west of the line of departure--but here the Americans locked horns with a determined enemy who was comfortably situated in the high ground.

Out in front of the battalion advance was part of a platoon belonging to Company G. When this force came under a violent hail of machine gun fire, the men raced for the cover of trees and bushes in a pell-mell scramble.

The terrible enemy fire took its toll. Three noncoms and all but seven of the men in the group fell in those first minutes after the German machine guns opened fire. York, the only surviving noncom, was left in command. He called for the others to move forward. They advanced and succeeded in overcoming the first machine gun nest and taking its crew prisoner. York told someone to see to getting the prisoners to the rear; then he moved out in advance of his tiny command to see what lay ahead of them. He had gone forward only a few yards when a line of 35 machine guns opened up and pinned him down.

The Tennessean found himself trapped and under fire within 25 yards of the enemy's machine gun pits--and he coolly decided to do something about the situation. He began firing into the nearest enemy position, aware that the Germans would have to expose themselves to get an aimed shot at him. His estimate of the situation proved correct. The Germans did have to rear up a little to get a shot off. And every time a German head showed over the parapet, York drilled a bullet into it!

After he had shot down more than a dozen enemy gunners in this fashion, he was charged by six German soldiers who came at him with fixed bayonets. York thereupon used a shooting trick that has been unofficial doctrine in the army ever since. With six men headed his way, he realized that if he dropped the first one the others would take cover behind their fallen comrade's body and be in a position to fire a volley at him.

York therefore drew a bead on the sixth man, and then on the fifth. He worked his way down the line, and practically before he knew it, the first man in line was charging the eagle-eyed American sharpshooter all by himself. York dropped him with a dead-center shot.

With the attack on his position disposed of, York again turned his attention on the machine gun pits. Every time he fired, another enemy soldier fell. As a captured German officer later observed, "Such marksmanship is bound to have a most demoralizing effect on the men who are the targets. . . ."

In between shots York called for the Germans to surrender. At first it may have seemed funny to the well-entrenched enemy; but the joke had become rather hollow by the time the Tennessean had killed his twenty-second victim. Shortly afterward a German officer (he turned out to be a major) advanced under a white flag and offered to surrender if York would stop shooting at his men.

The tall American agreed that it would be best to put an end to the bloodshed. He called his seven men forward, and with his pistol in hand followed the German officer back to the line of machine gun positions where 35 guns now stood silent.

York and his soldiers disarmed 90 Germans and prepared to move them to the rear. Then they realized that to do so would involve getting the entire detachment through a line of occupied German trenches. They were now inside enemy lines!

There was only one way to play it--boldly--York decided; and he resolved to march the whole kit and caboodle right through a trench filled with German riflemen. He jabbed his pistol in the enemy major's back, and through an interpreter warned that one false move would cost the officer his life. The officer quickly realized that the tall American wasn't bluffing.

They brazenly marched up to the front line trench, where York demanded--and received!--the surrender of the remaining Germans. Having taken a total of 132 prisoners, and knocked 35 machine guns out of action, York finally returned to his regiment's lines and found himself in a neighboring battalion's sector. He left the prisoners with this battalion and headed back to his own outfit. Captain Danforth was puzzled at seeing York, and asked why he didn't come from the direction of the front. For the first time in their relationship he found the mountaineer apprehensive and vague.

"If it was anyone but you, York," Danforth said, "I'd figure he'd ducked out during the shooting. But I know you too well. I suppose you've got your reasons, but I'll be dog-goned if I know what they are!"

95

But then, as the day wore on, rumors of Corporal York's amazing feat began to circulate throughout the regiment. Danforth got the story then, and nearly exploded in rage because York hadn't reported the affair to him.

"It all fits in," he told the battalion commander. "This morning after things quieted down we took 80 prisoners who said they were all that was left of a German machine gun battalion. I guess it was the rest of the battalion that York got!"

Intelligence officers questioned the prisoners and learned from their testimony the incredible story of how a fighting battalion was destroyed by one determined soldier armed only with a rifle and pistol.

What's more, it was learned that York had destroyed this battalion at a moment when it was supposed to support a German counterattack against the Americans on Hill 223. As a result of the battalion's demise, the counterattack was never made.

As word of York's exploit filtered to the rear, it was greeted first by disbelief, then by utter astonishment. All doubts were dispelled by a message from First Lieutenant Joseph A. Woods, Assistant Division Inspector.

The lieutenant's report stated, "I personally counted the prisoners reported by Corporal Alvin C. York, Company G, 328th Infantry, on October 8, 1918, and found them to be one hundred and thirty-two in number."

The combat accomplishments of the soldier from Pall Mall, Tennessee caught the fancy of a generation of Americans. More than thirty years later, rifle marksmen would still be trying to pattern themselves after Sergeant York of the A.E.F.

(From Bruce Jacobs, "Mountain Man in the Argonne," in Heroes of the Army, pp. 63-71.)

WORLD WAR II: EUROPE

World War II offers a particularly valuable field for the study of leadership in combat for several reasons. In size alone, it offers more examples than almost any modern period. In addition, enough histories and memoirs have been published that instances of successful and unsuccessful leadership can be examined in detail. For the United States, it was a war in which the professional and the citizen-soldier fought side by side, allowing their respective styles and successes to be studied. Finally, its propinquity in time to the First World War allows one to compare the actions of the junior officer of the first war to his later action and leadership as a senior officer in the second.

To begin, one can look profitably at one of the officers who had been an unknown hero of the first war and see how it prepared him to become one of the greatest field commanders of the second, Erwin Rommel.

On the eve of an adventure which would launch a reputation ultimately more familiar to the world at large than that of any other German general of the Second World War, Erwin Rommel was a name completely unknown outside the Army even at home, and little enough known inside it. He came from a simple middle-class family of moderate means, with no military tradition; both his father and grandfather had been schoolteachers. Rommel was a Wurttemberger, a race more renowned for its solidity and shrewd thriftiness than for any martial attributes. Aged forty-eight in 1940, he had been commissioned in 1912, with not particularly brilliant marks, into a not particularly brilliant line regiment. He appears to have made an early impact as a meticulous regimental officer, intolerant of anything slipshod, but--as his British biographer, Desmond Young, remarks--he was one of those soldiers who only "find in war the one occupation to which they are perfectly adapted." It was on the southern fringe of those fateful Ardennes, near Longwy, that Lieutenant Rommel had his first opportunity three weeks after the war broke out in 1914. With only three men and suffering painfully from food poisoning, he ran into some fifteen to twenty French troops; instead of calling up the rest of his platoon Rommel immediately opened fire and, taken by surprise, the enemy scattered. Five months later, after recovering from a thigh wound, Rommel won the Iron Cross by crawling with his platoon through barbed wire into the middle of the main French position, knocking out four blockhouses and then withdrawing with light losses before the defence could make an effective riposte. Although this was only a small-scale action, it was as characteristic of Rommel's expertise in the tactics of infiltration--which, as a senior commander, he was to bring to a supreme art--as it was of his nerveless audacity. Later in 1915 Rommel's skill at this kind of operation gained him transfer to a newly-created mountain battalion, designed to perform special tasks in "battle groups," the commanders of which were granted a freedom of action far in excess of their rank. In the brief Roumanian campaign

of 1916-17, Rommel carried out some almost incredible exploits, often with up to a whole battalion under his control, although he was still no more than a 1st lieutenant.

But the real summit of his First War career came during the Battle of Caporetto in October 1917, against the nation that would fight under his command in the Western Desert twenty-five years later. Penetrating the Italian lines at dawn, Rommel first surprised an enemy gun battery without a shot being fired. Then, diving still deeper behind the enemy positions, he surprised from the rear a counter-attacking Italian battalion. That too surrendered. After this success, Rommel was reinforced to a total of six companies and now took up position astride an important supply road well behind the enemy lines. Here he succeeded in capturing the best part of a brigade of crack Bersaglieri moving up towards the front. After fifty hours constantly on the move, he returned with the astonishing bag of 150 Italian officers, 9,000 men and 81 guns. For his feat, he was promoted captain and awarded the Pour le Merite, the equivalent of the Victoria Cross when given to a junior officer.

After the First War, Rommel became a natural candidate for the elite cadres of Seeckt's tiny Reichswehr. Promoted major in 1933, he chose to remain with his mountain troops as a regimental officer until two years later, when he was appointed instructor at the Potsdam War Academy, with the rank of lieutenant-colonel. During that time he was also assigned on special attachment to the Hitler Youth, but this ended after a short while when Rommel fell foul of their leader, the arrogant Baldur von Schirach. After three years at Potsdam, he was then sent to command the War Academy at Wiener Neustadt. He was by this time a full colonel, which, considering the huge expansion of the Wehrmacht, did not in any way denote a meteoric career. But he had neither connections with any of the great military clans, nor affiliations with the Party. His relationship with the Nazi machine in pre-war days was, in fact, not dissimilar to Guderian's; never remotely a Party man, he admired Hitler as a technician, and was responsive both to his kindred dynamism and receptiveness to unorthodox ideas. It was in 1938 that Rommel first caught Hitler's eye after publication of a simple but admirably clear textbook on infantry tactics, based on his own personal experiences from the First War and called Infanterie Greift An ("The Infantry Attacks"). At the time of the occupation of the Sudetenland, he was selected to command the battalion entrusted with Hitler's personal safety. On the outbreak of war the following year, Rommel was promoted major-general and, as Headquarters Commandant, again made responsible for guarding Hitler during the Polish campaign. He chafed at having no operational command, found himself antipathetic to the Party potentates like Martin Bormann, but was fascinated by the front-row view his job gave him of the campaign and its techniques. When it was over he asked Hitler for command of a Panzer division, by way of reward for past services. This was granted. On 15 February, Rommel

arrived at Bad Godesberg to take over the 7th, one of the four "light" divisions to be converted into Panzers that winter. Weaker than the original Panzer division, the 7th had three instead of four tank battalions, 218 instead of 276 tanks, and over half of these were Czech-made light-medium T-38s.

It was quite one of Rommel's most astonishing achievements that, in middle age, after a lifetime spent with the infantry and without any experience whatever of armour or mechanized forces, he should within three short months not only have been able to master the technique, but also to so mould a new unit that it would become perhaps the most consistently successful of all the Panzer divisions employed in France--and this despite the relative lightness of its armoured contingent. There were indeed those among his critics who considered that he never really understood the principles of armoured warfare. Again and again, he handled his large bodies of tanks very much as he had led those few raiding companies on their deep penetrations behind the Italian lines, with a bold unorthodoxy that sometimes shocked the purists. Often he had miraculous luck. Even more than Guderian, he was a commander whose constant closeness to the front provided him with an instant grasp of events.

* * * * *

At 0300 on the 13th [of May, 1940], Rommel with his A.D.C., Captain Schraepler, drove down to Dinant to find out what was going on. There he found shells falling from the French artillery on the other side of the Meuse, and a number of knocked-out tanks lying about in the streets leading down to the river. Enemy fire made it impossible for him to go any further in his conspicuous command vehicle, so he and Schraepler clambered on foot down to the river. Here his 6th Rifle Regiment was about to cross to the other bank in rubber assault boats, to reinforce the foothold made during the night by the motorcycle battalion. From here on, Rommel's own account remains probably the best and clearest of the day's events. The riflemen, says Rommel, were

being badly held up by heavy artillery fire and by the extremely troublesome small arms fire of French troops installed among the rocks on the west bank.

The situation when I arrived was none too pleasant. Our boats were being destroyed one after the other by the French flanking fire, and the crossing eventually came to a standstill. The enemy infantry were so well concealed that they were impossible to locate even after a long search through glasses. Again and again they directed their fire into the area in which I and my companions--the commanders of the Rifle Brigade and the Engineer Battalion--were lying.

The early-morning mist, which had provided such invaluable cover for the motor-cyclists in their crossing at Houx, was meanwhile dissipating. A smoke-screen was desperately needed with which to render innocuous the searing fire of the enemy infantry:

But we had no smoke unit. So I now gave orders for a number of tires in the valley to be set alight in order to supply the smoke we lacked.

Minute by minute the enemy fire grew more unpleasant. From up river a damaged rubber boat came drifting down to us with a badly wounded man clinging to it, shouting and screaming for help--the poor fellow was near to drowning. But there was no help for him here, the enemy fire was too heavy.

At this point Rommel turned his attention northwards to Houx, where the motor-cyclists were clinging precariously to their gains of the previous night. Most of the battalion had now reached the west bank, but the French resistance was mounting. Shortly after crossing, the commander of No. 1 Company, Captain Heilbronn, was wounded; then the Battalion Adjutant, Senior Lieutenant Pflug, and another subaltern were killed. Leading two companies himself, the Battalion Commander, Major Steinkeller, pushed up inland on to high ground after a brief struggle, taking the small hamlet of La Grange. But by mid-morning all contact with the east bank of the river had been effectively severed, there were still enemy pockets of resistance behind and heavy gunfire was coming down on the crossing area; the motor-cyclists had not yet been able to bring over any anti-tank guns, and in the event of any early French counter-attack accompanied by tanks, their position would of necessity be extremely perilous.

Not particularly happy, Rommel now drove south in a Mark IV tank to the 7th Rifle Regiment which, under Colonel von Bismarck, was trying to cross the Meuse opposite Bouvignes, about two miles south of Houx. On the way, he came under fire again several times from the west bank, and shell splinters wounded Schraepfer in the arm. Bismarck had already managed to get a company across the river, but, says Rommel,

the enemy fire had then become so heavy that their crossing equipment had been shot to pieces and the crossing had had to be halted. Large numbers of wounded were receiving treatment in a house close beside the demolished bridge. As at the northwest crossing point, there was nothing to be seen of the enemy who were preventing the crossing. . .

Rommel decided that there was no hope of getting any more men over the Meuse without bringing right down to the river bank "powerful artillery and tank support to deal with the enemy nests." To effect this, he

drove back to divisional H.Q. where he found both his corps commander, Hoth, and the commander of the 4th Army, Kluge, following his progress with interest. Then he returned to the Meuse, to Leffe on the northern outskirts of Dinant, so as "to get the crossing moving there." At Leffe, Rommel continues:

we found a number of rubber boats, all more or less badly damaged by enemy fire, lying in the street where our men had left them. Eventually, after being bombed on the way by our own aircraft, we arrived at the river. . . The crossing had now come to a complete standstill, with the officers badly shaken by the casualties which their men had suffered. On the opposite bank we could see several men of the company which was already across, among them many wounded. . . The officers reported that nobody dared show himself outside cover, as the enemy opened fire immediately on anyone they spotted.

The Mark IV tanks called for by Rommel began to arrive, and Captain Konig of the 25th Panzer Regiment takes up the story:

Only half the tanks reach the edge of the Meuse, the rest remain with tracks that have been thrown off and other damage, somewhere on the slope. On the Meuse all hell is let loose--the enemy defends himself from a mass of bunkers and provisional battle positions--every house on the other side of the bank is equipped to assist the defence. Concentrated fire is coming down on the positions of our engineers, and the Meuse water is whipped up by constant artillery and mortar-shell explosions.

The tanks cruised slowly along the river road, with their turrets traversed at 90 degrees, firing at little more than one hundred yards' range directly into the French bunkers and machine-gun nests on the opposite bank.

The fire of the Panzer guns [continues Konig], the 75-mm. shells as well as the well-scattered 20-mm. quick-firing cannon, soon show an effect. . . the companies shoot almost as if they were in training, and no recognized target, no suspicious movement of the enemy, remains unnoticed. The enemy fire begins to slacken noticeably, but nevertheless the crossing of the first storm boats, the engineers, remains a hard task, a task from which many don't come back. In impotent rage, the tank crews watch boats torn to pieces by direct hits. . .

One particularly troublesome pill-box was engaged by Lieutenant Hanke, who, after firing several rounds, knocked it out.

Under cover of the tanks' gunfire, the crossings slowly got under way again, and a cable ferry using several large pontoons was started up. During these operations, according to Captain Konig, "General Rommel is everywhere. He is with the engineers, he leaps on to a Mark IV tank in order to give it the target himself. He is no easy chief for his staff. . ." To whip up the flagging zeal of his obviously badly shaken riflemen, Rommel seems to have returned to a previous incarnation that morning, and to have acted more like the junior officer leading his raiding parties behind the Italian lines at Caporetto than a divisional commander. He states:

I now took over personal command of the 2nd Battalion of the 7th Rifle Regiment and for some time directed operations myself.

With Lieutenant Most I crossed the Meuse in one of the first boats and at once joined the company which had been across since early morning. From the company command post we could see Companies Enkefort and Lichter were making rapid progress.

I then moved up north along a deep gully to Company Enkefort. As we arrived an alarm came in: "Enemy tanks in front." The company had no anti-tank weapons, and I therefore gave orders for small arms fire to be opened on the tanks as quickly as possible.

From this there arose the belle legende, long attributed to Rommel, that he told his hard-pressed infantry to fire their Very pistols at the French tanks, to simulate the tracer effect of anti-tank shells. Whether true or not, the result was indisputable and the tanks withdrew, while Rommel reported that "large numbers of French stragglers came through the bunker and slowly laid down their arms."

It was now about midday, and things were beginning to look a bit better for Rommel. With Lieutenant Most, he returned once more to the east bank, driving north with a tank and a signals vehicle to where the 6th Rifle Regiment were supporting the beleaguered motor-cycle battalion. Here the crossing was "in full swing," and Rommel was told that already twenty badly-needed anti-tank guns had been forded across the river.

A company of the engineer battalion was busily engaged in building 8-ton pontoons, but I stopped them and told them to build the 16-ton type. I aimed to get part of the Panzer Regiment across as quickly as possible. As soon as the first pontoon was ready I took my 8-wheeled signals vehicle across.

The waiting Panzer crews, their vehicles under cover just off the river, watched impatiently as the sweating engineers struggled away under a broiling midday sun. Several times the pontoons were hit, at least

one of them actually sinking to the bottom of the river with a tank on it, and the Engineer battalion commander was killed, together with a number of his men.

At this point in the consolidation of the bridgehead, Rommel seems momentarily to have been struck with an excess of optimism. According to 7th Panzer's official history, in the late afternoon he summoned three subalterns commanding his light tank detachments and told them: "Meine Herren! The enemy is in full retreat. We shall follow up immediately, and even today we shall reach X-locality eighteen kilometres west of Dinant!" But work on the ferries was further delayed by French interdiction fire, and it was not until twilight that the first of those tank detachments was able to cross, so that Rommel had to drop any intention of breaking out of the bridgehead in favour of consolidation.

— Meanwhile, according to Rommel, "the enemy had launched a heavy attack, and the fire of their tanks could be heard approaching the ridge of the Meuse bank." Rommel crossed the Meuse again, heading towards the firing. Arriving at the infantry brigade H.Q. now established there,

I found the situation looking decidedly unhealthy. The Commander of the 7th Motor-cycle Battalion had been wounded, his adjutant killed, and a powerful French counter-attack had severely mauled his men in Grange. There was a danger that enemy tanks might penetrate into the Meuse valley itself.

Leaving my signals lorry on the west bank, I crossed the river again and gave orders for first the Panzer Company, and then the Panzer Regiment, to be ferried across during the night. However, ferrying tanks across the 120-yards-wide river by night was a slow job, and by morning there were still only fifteen tanks on the west bank, an alarmingly small number.

(From Alistair Horne, To Lost a Battle: France 1940, pp. 308-317.)

Rommel's success in the first war against the Italians at Caporetto, where he won the Pour le Merite, better known to American soldiers as the "Blue Max," the highest decoration for bravery, had a definite effect on his style of leadership. At Caporetto, he had achieved his success by leading from the front and setting the example for his men without regard for his own safety. Many brilliant and successful commanders have possessed this disdain for enemy fire. Although the following passage refers to him as a general in North Africa, he had behaved the same in the earlier war as a junior officer.

Rommel's men considered him to be invulnerable. "No bullet has ever been forged for the Old Man," they used to say in amazement, or with a shake of the head, when he had once more sensed the danger and moved off in his armoured car just before a shell had burst. They lay in the desert muck under a hail of enemy machine-gun fire--could not even put their noses out of their slit trenches without the risk of having their heads blown off. The attack was halted, Rommel came rushing up and stood upright in the trench, shielding his eyes with his hands against the sun. "What the hell's the matter with you fellows? When things get a bit hot over there you don't have to do a belly-flop every time!" Hardly had he gone than there were casualties once more. It was always the same story. Many of the old desert foxes have told me similar stories--men who returned home with the Iron Cross and the Knight's Cross and who certainly were not scared of a bombardment. Yes, no bullet had ever been forged for Erwin Rommel.

Naturally the legend of Rommel's invulnerability ran the rounds of the front lines; prisoners carried it across to No Man's Land and the German general was soon considered invincible by the Tommies, also. Bewildered British officers took note of this mystique and reported: "Rommel's very name and legend are in the process of becoming a psychological danger to the British Army."

(From Paul Carell, The Foxes of the Desert, pp. 44-45.)

An appreciation for Rommel's abilities and shortcomings can be gained from interviews with Rommel's peers who survived the war; they provide insights into Rommel's "leadership style."

The outstanding feature of Rommel's successes is that they were achieved with an inferiority of force, and without any command of the air. No other generals on either side gained the victory under such conditions, except for the early British leaders under Wavell, and their successes were won against Italians. That Rommel made mistakes is clear, but when fighting superior forces any slip may result in defeat, whereas numerous mistakes can be effectively covered up by the general who enjoys a big advantage of strength.

More definite defects were his tendency to disregard the administrative side of strategy and his lack of thoroughness over detail. At the same time he did not know how to delegate authority, a defect that was very irritating to his chief subordinates. He not only tried to do everything himself but to be everywhere--so that he was often out of touch with his headquarters, and apt to be riding round the battlefield when he was wanted by his staff for some important decision. On the other hand, he had a wonderful knack of appearing at some vital spot and giving a decisive impetus to the action at a crucial moment. He also gave dynamic junior officers such opportunities to prove their value as seniority-bound generals would never have dreamt of allowing

them. As a result he was worshipped by the younger men. That feeling was shared by many of the Italian soldiers who saw him in such a vital contrast to their own senile and safety-first higher commanders.

In the field of tactics, Rommel was often brilliant in ruse and bluff. In his first attack in Africa he pushed his tanks so hard that many went astray in the desert, but when he reached the main British position he cleverly concealed the scanty number that were present by utilizing trucks to raise a great cloud of dust, and create the impression that tanks were converging from all sides. This produced a collapse.

While extremely daring he was also subtle. A repeated feature of his battles was the way he used his tanks as a bait, to lure the British tanks into traps that were lined with anti-tank guns--thus skilfully blending the defensive with the offensive. These "Rommel tactics" became increasingly adopted by all armies as the war advanced.

(From B.H. Liddell Hart, The German Generals Talk, pp. 50-51.)

* * * * *

Rommel's drive, lead-from-the-front style, and his disregard of personal danger was shared by other commanders on both sides in World War II. A countryman who shared them was Hyazinth von Strachwitz, almost unknown but Rommel's equal on the tactical level.

The von Strachwitzs were Silesian landed gentry with military backgrounds and Hyazinth, after service in both the First World War and the Freikorps, entered the army of the Third Reich. He transferred from the Cavalry to the 2nd Panzer regiment and with that unit fought both in the Polish and the French campaigns. It was, however, during the war with Russia that his ability first came to the fore. His exploits were legendary and his ability undoubted. He himself claimed to have a sixth sense which made easier his task of fighting Russian armour. But it was not only inside his machine that he could fight. On more than one occasion, but first during the fighting around Ivka, his tank was cut off from the main body and surrounded by Red Army infantry keen on capturing a German panzer commander and his machine. Von Strachwitz dismounted from his tank and fought the Russian soldiers in hand-to-hand combat until the fault which had caused the tank to stop had been repaired. Despite a wound--he was wounded in all a total of fourteen times--he climbed back into his Pz Kw IV and led his battalion into fresh assaults.

In one of the speedy thrusts for which he eventually became famous his group of tanks broke through the rigid Russian defence line, then reached and destroyed the Soviet supply echelons before the Red Army. He was, in effect, advancing faster than the retreating Soviets. His battalion knew no rest for he drove it on, as he drove himself on, in a series of day and night drives to confuse and outflank the Soviet Army.

He seemed to be leading every advance. His tank was the first across the river bridge at Pervomaisk and once on the far bank he attacked and destroyed a column of more than 300 Soviet soft-skin vehicles as well as their protective screen of anti-tank and field artillery pieces. His machine led the 6th Army into Stalingrad and, during the months of battle which his battalion endured in and around that tragic city, hundreds of T 34s and other Soviet machines were destroyed.

Upon return from convalescence, for he had been wounded in the fighting around Stalingrad, he found himself promoted to command the panzer regiment of the German Army's crack division Grossdeutschland. It was with this new command that his exploits rose from the unusual to the legendary. The military situation facing the Germans at that time was that the army had fewer men and had to hold back a Red Army flushed with success, well-equipped and armed with all the weapons of victory. For the Germans the days of panzer armies achieving strategic victories were long past. Now a handful of machines, capably handled and brilliantly led, had to wrest tactical successes from the numerically superior Red Army. It was precisely this sort of task in which Count Hyaizinth von Strachwitz excelled.

On one occasion his group of four panzers penetrated deep into the area behind the Soviet line and lay concealed, waiting for the tanks which he knew must pass that way. Soon an armada of armoured fighting vehicles approached him, not expecting to meet German tanks so deep in their own army's rear areas. With the advantage of complete surprise to aid him his group opened up and within an hour had shot to ruin 105 Soviet tanks; and all this without the loss of a single German tank.

At Kharkov the fire discipline of his crews brought them success against another mass of Soviet machines. By their deliberately avoiding movement or retaliatory fire the Soviet armour was lured into a trap. A column of eighty machines moved during the night upon what they thought was a weakly-held village. At a distance of less than thirty-five metres von Strachwitz's Tiger (he had helped to form the first Tiger battalions) opened fire and blew the turret off the leading T 34. His other Tigers fired their huge 8.8cm guns and within minutes thirty-six Soviet machines had been destroyed, were blown apart or were burning furiously.

(From James Lucas, War on the Eastern Front, pp. 23-24.)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Some of the most stirring and instructive accounts of combat leadership of American forces are found in the saga of the airborne forces after the Normandy landings.

Capture of Saint Mere-Eglise was a critical mission of the 82d Airborne Division in order to prevent German reinforcements from reaching the landing beaches. Worrying about its capture, a commander sent a strong officer, Lieutenant Turner B. Turnbull, and his platoon to reinforce the elements there.

In holding the village through the first critical day, Turnbull gave an example of what today would be called "participative leadership"--he solicited, considered, and in part accepted the advice and suggestions of his men. The point to be made here is that Turnbull's leadership was not that of the weak and indecisive leader who leaves command, by default, to his subordinates; rather, he was a leader whose men trusted him in part because they knew that in a dicey situation he would listen to and consider their suggestions even after he had reached a decision.

Turnbull's men could see the forms of enemy riflemen wiggling along the ditches which ran next the hedgerows bounding their flanks. The nearest ones were not more than 60 yards away. But they were fleeting targets, and the mortar fire came in so steadily that the Americans couldn't prop up to fire at them. Turnbull's force had dwindled to 23 men still capable of lifting a weapon. They were taking care of 11 wounded who were litter cases; the others were dead. The German fire had been beating on the asphalt of the roadway, barring evacuation of the casualties to Ste. Mere-Eglise. Now they were suddenly aware not only that the wounded were trapped but that it was probably too late to save anyone. The circle of enemy force was within 170 yards of closing to the rearward. Their last chance was slipping away while they looked at one another.

Turnbull pointed toward the enemy skirmishers crawling in the ditches. He yelled out to his men, "I have heard about spots like this. We're surrounded. That leaves one thing to do. Hit them in the center. So we charge them."

One private spoke up. "Sir," he said, "I'm ready."

Private Joseph Sebastian had just come back from prowling the right flank. There he had talked to Corporal Joseph Tremel, who had been with Keenan when he died. Tremel had said to him, "Some of the krauts are in the houses, but most of them are still one hedgerow short of it."

So Sebastian spoke up, saying to Turnbull, "I think you're wrong. We're not quite cut off yet. There's a chance that we can get out. And that's what we ought to do."

His protest shook Turnbull and he yelled out to the others, "What about it? Tell me what you want to do."

They chorused back, "He's right. Let's get out. There's still time."

So in a twinkling they got set. Turnbull said, "We'll have to leave the wounded."

Corporal James Kelly, the aide man, spoke up: "I'll stay here with the wounded and surrender them if I can keep from getting killed." Turnbull nodded. There were some weapons far over on the right which he knew he must abandon; the German skirmishers were now closing with a rush.

Then up spoke Sebastian again, saying, "I talked you into this withdrawal; OK, so I stay here and cover Kelly and the others with my BAR."

There wasn't time to argue with him. Sergeant Niland started toward one of the machine guns, intending to stay with Sebastian, along with Corporal Raymond Smitson, who, saying nothing, had taken his place beside the wounded, carrying a sack of hand grenades. Before he could touch the weapon, Niland was shot dead by a German who rushed him with a machine pistol.

Someone screamed, "Let's go! For Christ's sake, let's go!"

They went out at a dead run--16 of them all together--each man feeling certain that he would be shot down before he had moved a dozen steps.

But though they did not know it, there was help at hand. Getting back to Ste. Mere-Eglise after his quick reconnaissance, [LTC Benjamin] Vandervoort [Turnbull's battalion commander] couldn't get the platoon out of his mind. Salvation came of his worry. Someone else in the command dispatched a runner to Turnbull saying that he should hold until he saw a white flare signal rise above Ste. Mere-Eglise. But that word was not passed to Vandervoort, and Turnbull had fought on through the fire-swept afternoon and into the evening, still looking vainly for the white flare. Sweating along with him, feeling at last that Turnbull's time had run out, Vandervoort ordered a platoon from Easy Company, 505th, to speed to Neuville and hold the back door open if the Turnbull force still lived.

Turnbull did not see the friendly force arrive. It reached the center of Neuville and deployed beyond the houses west of the road in the same minutes that he prepared his men to cut and run. In their flight, the 16 survivors dashed past this line with such speed that they missed seeing it. But they owed their escape to its lunge and to the covering fire from Sebastian and Smitson, who were captured. Turnbull's men ran all the way to Ste. Mere-Eglise. Nothing was said until they pulled up winded except an occasional cry from a noncom, "Keep scattered!" Having fired until Turnbull's party swept past, the Easy platoon also picked up weapons and ran clear out of range before the Germans could form and fire from the ridge of high ground running through the hamlet.

By its all-day stand, Turnbull's handful had kept the Ste. Mere-Eglise force from being hit simultaneously north and south during the most critical hours of D-day. Turnbull, who had been ready to stage his own little Balaklava at Neuville, but had been saved from it by Private Sebastian, gained this much from the respite--a few more hours in which to fight before death took him in action.

(From S.L.A. Marshall, Night Drop: The American Airborne Invasion of Normandy, pp. 36-39.)

Another "dour but determined" soldier, Captain Roy E. Creek, used personal reconnaissance, a calm assessment of his situation, and a stroke of good luck to gain success.

Not more than 15 minutes after the pull-out, the Germans brought up an artillery piece on the west shore and from 600 yards opened direct fire on Creek's ground. It all happened very quickly. The first round was a bull's-eye. By the time they slammed in a dozen more, the shellfire had taken fourteen of the defenders. Creek rushed around from foxhole to foxhole, counting his dead, seeing what could be done for the wounded. Making that round, he heard one of his paratroopers yell, "Hey, Captain, look there!" and saw him gesturing toward the rear.

Creek looked. Amid the farmhouses nested to the south of the village, he saw a line of German infantry rapidly deploying northward as if to close around his rear. It "looked like a hundred men" but might have been 50. They were still about 300 yards away. Creek guessed that they had hidden in the farm buildings all morning awaiting the open-and-shut opportunity which arrived when Maloney left.

So he was trapped now, the big gun battering his front, the rifle swarm enveloping his rear. Creek took it calmly. He reckoned that it would be another four or five minutes before the enemy infantry, at last fully extended, came forward firing. There seemed little point for the moment in turning his own people and weapons around to face the new threat.

Just then, help came out of heaven. An American glider carrying a 57-millimeter antitank gun nosed gently down and landed in dead center of Creek's position. They had not seen it till it was right on them.

His men jumped for the gun. Handling it like veteran artillerymen, they got it set, loaded, aimed and fired before the German infantry could react. Their second round hit the German artillery piece across the Merderet and smashed it. Then they swung the gun around and got away two rounds against the German infantry. Its line broke and ran for the swamp. The officers tried to turn them. Amid that effort, a division staff officer walked into Creek's position with a reinforcing platoon. Thereon the German infantry vanished wholly, still not having fired.

It was dusk. Creek had no intention of trying again for the bridge. He felt that his own 20 men were spent and he didn't care to rush the newcomers. But he wanted to find ground where the troops might spell one another for a few winks and still have greater safety through the night. So in search of a snigger position he walked north along the riverbank.

So doing, he found a narrow nub of solid land projecting for about 15 yards into the Merderet. Sighting from it, he could see that his weapon would put direct fire into the German positions west of the bridge. It had been beckoning all day; but not one person had thought to scout round the bend.

One machine gun and a handful of riflemen firing from this coign for ten minutes swung the balance before dark came down. The Germans were picked off one by one. The end came when two last survivors rose from their foxholes and fled westward.

Creek then pushed the new platoon across the bridge to hold the diggings among the enemy dead. So seated, he had a loose grip on one end of the causeway but was still far from winning a bridgehead. The solid western bank was 700 yards away, and the expanse of marsh made the distance seem infinite.

Forty German corpses were counted among the foxholes and strewn along the embankments. Creek's own losses were 13 dead and 23 wounded.

Neither the box score nor the small victory made him feel any better. He was bitter most of all at himself, and raging that he had done things so badly.

He said to the others, "Who's the big damn fool? Look at me. Fight all day. Lose a lot of people. And at last I stumble into doing what any boy scout would have done in the first place."

Some of his seniors had also looked at the forest and missed the tree. But that knowledge didn't stop his brooding.

(From *ibid.*, pp. 78-80.)

In another case, a cohesive unit with a brave but mortal lieutenant commanding achieved success through his personal example which inspired determined subordinates in the chain of command.

→ Second Lieutenant William A. Oakley had the platoon guarding the bank to the right of the bridge. It was a poor position, barren of natural cover except for a few dwarf shrubs. The platoon had lasted only because its foxholes were deep. There had come to Oakley at dawn a squad from the 307th Engineers, and combining the eight men with two machine-gun crews from Headquarters Company, he extended his flank until their weapons could fire crosswise over the length of the causeway.

When shortly after 0800 mortar shells in barrage volume broke upon the east shore, the worst of it was concentrated against Oakley's ground. He began to hear the cry, "Aid man! Aid man!" The enemy

machine guns had also lifted fire from the marsh and were drilling the embankment. But their aim was too high. Only the mortars banged home.

Two hours of this, and the enemy attack came on, four Renault tanks in the van. The armor got only as far as the blackened hulls wrecked on the day before. Peterson and pals met it head on, helped by the 57-millimeter gun, now firing from just above the marsh line. It was nigh untenable ground for an antitank weapon, but no worse than the position of Corporal Felix Ferrazzi, a radio man filling in at a machine gun under Oakley. With his weapon, he had stationed himself right under the barrel of the 57-millimeter gun, so that both pieces could direct a synchronized line of fire on the bridge.

Other gunners begged him to move, yelling, "That's suicide; no one can take it." He shook them off. The blast of the 57 convulsed his body and made him gasp for air; he shook it off. One mortar burst showered him with fragments, cutting him terribly around his head and neck. But with blood already running from his ears, he kept firing. Some minutes later, a second mortar burst socked him again. He tried to pull the trigger. But one shard had also smashed into his weapon, disabling it. He flopped across the gun, and some kind rescuer in a rush pulled him to cover.

Together, Peterson's rockets, the 57 and Ferrazzi's fire had killed the front Renault. That piled up the German column. But in its last gasp, the Renault had run on past Peterson's road block position, to die next to the wreck which the Americans had dragged onto the causeway the day before. Peterson and crew had lammed out and safely made the company line.

But though the enemy was blocked a second time, it was not a repeat performance. The pile-up of German armor in juxtaposition to the wreckage from the earlier fight threw a barrier (or shield) of metal broadwise of the causeway, and the enemy infantry sprang to make best use of it. Thereby the two sides became locked in a sudden death grapple at 35 yards' range, the Germans behind steel, the Americans partly helped by dirt banks.

The rain of mortar shell on the west bank doubled in intensity and, being aimed at the 57-millimeter gun, clobbered Oakley's ground. One burst felled Oakley, and he spouted so much blood that he had to be carried out; another burst wiped out the gun crew. When Oakley fell, the platoon command was taken over by Sergeant William D. Owens, a quiet little man, slow of speech, a Detroit punch drill operator turned soldier in his late thirties. As he rose to the task, Owens wasn't sure that he still had a line. Half the foxholes were empty and the remaining strength dwindled as he looked. Men limped or crawled

away, jackets bloodied, arms shattered or faces ripped open. First Sergeant Robert M. Matteson, placing himself a few yards to the rear of the rifle pits to steer the wounded back, found them coming in such numbers that he "felt like a cop directing traffic."

But Owens stood there, conspicuously in the open, impressively imperturbable, rallying a company by his own steadiness. The moment had come when the example of one man's cold heroism was the margin between victory and defeat. Already, half the platoon were casualties; in Owens's own squad, three men remained. The rest of the company deployment, owing to the roll of the ground in relation to the line of the causeway, was not in position effectively to help the platoon. The men could fire; but they couldn't see the targets behind the wrecked German armor. The issue was being decided on the ground where Owens stood. If his platoon broke, the whole position was gone.

The strays who had come in that morning from across the river were the first to lam out--not all, but a few. Most of them were shocked and exhausted by their experience and, having no identification with the unit, responded to the instinct for self-preservation. Owens was too preoccupied with the fight to try to stop them, but he could measure the effect on his own men; they fired less, and more and more they glanced anxiously rearward. Matteson saw a lieutenant--stranger to the company--break for the rear and tried to make him turn about. "To hell with it," said the officer. "I saw a whole battalion of Germans over there this morning. We can't stop them and it's time to get out." Matteson couldn't tell him to stay.

The machine-gun ammunition supply was now down to one box per weapon. The guns were kept fed by the persistence of Supply Sergeant Edwin F. Wancio, who kept boring up to the line from rearward laden like a pack animal. There were no spare barrels for the guns. They were fired so continuously (the output was approximately 40 boxes per weapon) that, from overheating, when the gunners tried to hold fire momentarily, the guns kept spitting for 15 or 20 rounds. Two of the guns broke down from overusage; Lieutenant John Otto cannibalized them under fire, and one gun went back to work.

But the wear on men and weapons reached the cracking point. More of the strays ducked away. More of Owens's men crawled out bleeding. He had at last but 14 men, and they were wavering. They kept saying to him, "We're through; we must get out; let's go now." He answered them, "No, we will wait for orders. We haven't been told to go."

Yet Owens was uncertain of his own decision; maybe the men were right. So he sent a runner over to Dolan to ask what he had better do.

Back to the survivors came the message. Dolan had written it out, these words scrawled in pencil: "I don't know a better spot than this to die."

Owens shouted the answer aloud to his men. There were no cheers from the foxholes. But they had the word and they faced the river and resumed fire. In less than two minutes the crisis was over. Raising a Red Cross flag, the Germans asked for a half-hour truce to evacuate their wounded. Able Company rejoiced to take time out to succor its own wounded, though unaware that the enemy had quit. During the 30 minutes, the German bid to hold the Merderet barrier on both sides passed into eclipse. The enemy infantry did not come on again; under cover of the truce, what was left of the Renaults and rifle power faded back to Cauquigny.

* * * * *

Able Company was formed on the ground where it had fought just before starting the march away from the river. It had been 147 able-bodied men the day before. Death and hard wounds had cut it to 81. When that number lined up facing Sergeant Matteson, 23 of them wore bandages or were still bleeding, while awaiting medical attention.

(From *ibid.*, pp. 87-91.)

The example of the commander of the 3d Battalion, 502d Airborne Infantry, Lieutenant Colonel Bob Cole, offers some informative insights into the leadership of airborne forces. According to S.L.A. Marshall, LTC Cole was a hard and demanding commander who gave his subordinates a "hard ride," sometimes causing them to be overly optimistic in their reporting to please him. A complex personality, he was physically fit but besought by inner fears that he might someday fail his men as a leader. On the drop, Cole was separated from his men and experienced the frustration shared by many others that night of being unable to carry out the carefully crafted plans for the airborne forces.

Cole's men are attempting to take a causeway where concealed German troops have frustrated them for a day when the narrative begins.

Cole doubled back to Regiment. He wanted it made clear beyond doubt that the plan was still on, and the attack had to be made.

Simmons again scouted forward. From his better hole in the ditch he heard wagons creaking along the road, coming toward him, and he wondered whether the Germans were bringing in field mines or more machine guns.

At 0400, Cole returned with the order to go. Simmons's men were still feeding through the barrier breach at the rate of one per minute. He had ordered that spacing, lest they be caught bunching when the Germans resumed fire.

Cole said, "To hell with that. Line up, all of you! We've got to take the risk or we'll never be ready." The results justified him. All of How Company and of George, which followed, got through the breach without hearing one bullet. Cole, after looking over Item Company, ordered it to the rear. Only 21 men and 2 officers were left of the 80 and 5 who had marched to the causeway.

(From *ibid.*, p. 359.)

The assault failed with further losses to the German snipers and Cole tried another tack.

Cole crawled back along the ditch, about 50 yards.

He said to Rosemond, the artillery liaison officer, "Get some shellfire on the farmhouse and the hedges."

Rosemond made his call, then told Cole, "We can't give you any fire; the artillery commander isn't present with the guns to approve the request."

"Cole said, "God damn it! We need artillery, and we can't wait for any general."

The shells started coming in less than 15 minutes.

Cole clocked the first explosion at 0530. For the next 25 minutes the artillery pounded the hedgerows around the farmhouse. Cole and Rosemond watched the bursts. The stuff seemed to be getting in where they wanted it. Still, there was no slackening of the enemy weapons. Rather, the roar and rattle built up higher.

By Cole's order, the artillery switched from air bursts to delay and then changed back again. It made no difference. Bullets whipped through the thorn above the ditches and tore into the embankments in as great volume as before.

Simmons was too busy with his wounded and the defense of his narrow ditch to pay heed to the artillery. Still, he wondered about Cole. His was the lead company. He was expected to carry the action. But if Cole gave any thought to his infantry, he hadn't indicated it since his first exchange with Rosemond.

Cole, momentarily, was stumped. Though he confessed it to no one and sought no counsel, he had no idea what to do next. For one fleeting moment, he considered withdrawing his men the way they had come. Then he wondered about trying to advance them a few at a time along the main road to Carentan. Or as a last alternative, what about charging the farmhouse to win or lose it all in one throw?

He spent no time weighing these options. Nor did he look to his battalion again to see how it was spread. The decision was made on impulse, not as a well-reasoned thing, but with almost explosive force. It was like a quarterback picking a play number without thinking of the formation or remembering where goes the ball. The Texan was that way in battle. By nature, one of the gentlest and most lovable of men, he tightened up under fire, never personally afraid, but haunted by the nightmare that he would somehow let down his people. His rashness, irritability and failure to talk things over all came of that disturbance.

Major Stopka lay in a ditch across the road. Cole yelled to him, "Hey, we're going to order smoke from the artillery and then make a bayonet charge on the house."

Stopka answered, "OK!" raising not one question.

Then Cole turned back to Rosemond and told him what he wanted.

Within a few minutes the smoke shells were falling in an arc which had the farmhouse as its center, extending past the Madeleine River on one end and curtaining the main road to Carentan on the left.

Cole waited beside Rosemond while the smoke was being laid. Fifteen to 20 minutes passed. He called to Rosemond, "Adjust to leftward to meet the wind." That the curtain should be exactly right was his sole concern.

(From *ibid.*, pp. 363-364.)

As the preparations continued, further losses were experienced and one company was left leaderless when the bayonet charge was ordered. Murphy's Laws and the "fog of war" combined to thwart Cole's plans, but his determination and the leadership by example of him and his subordinate commanders combined to win success.

Cole had passed the word to Stopka, and the word was supposed to have been passed on down to the company commanders and from them to the men: "Everybody fix bayonets and reload rifles with a full clip; be ready to go at the sound of a whistle."

Three companies--George, How, and Headquarters--were supposed to have received the order. With every part of the command far-stretched, pinned and under unrelenting fire, it would have taken extraordinary diligence and a shipload of luck to get that order circulated and understood.

Stopka, his mind on other things, merely walked to the hedge on his side of the road and, seeing some riflemen under the lee of the hedge opposite, shouted Cole's order to them until they nodded as if they understood.

That was all Stopka did. Cole stuck fast to Rosemond, regulating the artillery, never looking at his battalion. At 0615, Cole gave an order to Rosemond. Responding, the guns lifted their fire to Phase Line B--the railroad track beyond the farmhouse.

When he heard the killing shells come screaming over, Cole blasted on his whistle and, not saying a word, took off at a trot across a ditch. It was a small miracle that all of 21 men followed him as the charge got in motion.

Too late, Stopka had recognized his own error. Dashing across the road, he was in an instant among the 40 or so men in the small meadow, exhorting them, "Come on! Let's go! Over the hedge! Follow the colonel!"

But collection was no longer possible. Stopka couldn't in one moment of excitement clarify what was wanted. Only the men nearest him rose and ran toward the farm. A picket squad trailed after Cole. Headquarters and How companies were represented by one a man or two.

Cole looked back over his shoulder, and what he saw almost stunned him. In agony of mind, he concluded that his battalion had quit cold on him--and he was dead wrong.

Back in the ditches and behind the hedges, men were talking like this:

"I heard someone yell something after a f----- whistle."

"Well, what about the f----- whistle?"

"Damned if I know."

And another pair talked:

"They say we should fix bayonets."

How do they figure to use them?"

"I didn't hear."

Like the order, the signal couldn't be heard except by a small circle, and where it was heard, few understood what it meant. In the confusion, the few to whom the message was passed heard it halfway or

garbled. The words couldn't rise above the sounds of battle. The majority heard nothing. The minority knew something was afoot, but didn't know the charge was on until they saw a trickle of men running across a field. Then a few of the bolder spirits raced after, trying to catch up.

Cole ran halfway across the meadow. His wind gave out. He stopped, knelt on one knee and looked back again. Bullets were clipping the grass all around him and whining overhead.

He saw that his men were trailing him single file. So he pumped both arms at them, yelling, "For Christ's sake, spread out." Instead, they hit the dirt, one behind the other. Then he worked them over individually, booting them and shouting, "Get up and go on!"

His Colt .45 was in his hand. He pointed it wildly in the direction of the farmhouse, shouting, "God damn, I don't know what I'm shooting at, but I gotta keep on."

His aimless trigger-pulling and the wild yelling broke the spell. There was laughter from among those flattened forms able still to squeeze it out. Six were killed by bullets as they lay there with Cole exhorting them.

Private Robert E. Doran, Cole's radio operator (later killed in Holland), came running forward, his SCR 300 radio strapped to his back. His bound restored motion to Cole, and they trotted on together. The smoke barrage was clearing, and through rifts in it, they saw the farmhouse.

Stopka overtook them and ran on, screaming, "Let's go! Let's go!" He hurdled a broad ditch. Cole, on a different course, jumped a low hedge and came down in the same ditch, like a fouling point-to-point chaser, in water up to his neck. He yelled back to Doran, "Don't follow me!" But Doran was already in mid-air and made the same jump, landing dry.

Others caught the leaders and passed them. Stopka saw two men shot down ahead of him. He yelled to one of them, Private Edwin S. Pastouris, "How are you?"

Pastouris, hit through the chest, yelled back, "I'm OK. You keep going!"

Fifteen men from How and Headquarters Companies, arriving belatedly, ran on along the main road to the hedgerow forming the rear boundary of the farm, then turned and ran down the hedge on the outside till they came even with the house. Never pausing, they disappeared into the orchard.

That was how Cole wanted it. By now he was standing by the building, waving his men on. There was no other way to do it. They all had the impulse to stop and duck under cover.

Dead Germans lay thick over the ground and in the foxholes. The only live ones in sight were mortally stricken. Survivors of the machine-gun crews had quit their stoutly fortified bunkers along an earth mount just beyond the farmhouse and pulled back through the orchard toward the railroad; only a few got trapped before they could let it. The American artillery kept on firing toward the railroad. Battalion had lost contact with the guns, and they held on the last assigned target.

As the men came along, Cole, with Stopka's aid, distributed the token forces so that the battalion could again be brought in hand as the manpower deployed forward. How and Headquarters companies were to assemble on the right of the farm before continuing the action. George Company would collect around a brush pile behind the house. Item Company's remnant, which was now filing through Bridge No. 4, would form on George Company.

"After we see what we've got left," Cole said to Stopka, "we'll know better what to do."

(From *ibid.*, pp. 366-369.)

* * * * *

➤ A later airborne operation, the attempt to flank the Ruhr area codenamed Market-Garden shows the improvisational ability of good leadership as well as the value to well-trained troops of leadership by example. Execution of the plans for the operation had gone awry and the airborne forces were trying to conduct an unplanned river crossing for which they have no training or experience as the narrative opens.

The assault site lay to the east of the massive PGEM electrical power plant, and originally it was believed that the crossing could be made from the plant itself. There, at the river's edge, a small inlet afforded protection for the loading, unobserved by the Germans. Colonel Tucker had rejected the site; it was too close to the enemy-held railway bridge. As the troopers emerged from the dock area, the Germans could sweep each assault wave with machine-gun fire. Here, too, at the mouth of the inlet, the 8-to 10-mile-an-hour current swirled stronger. Shifting farther west, Tucker planned to have the men rush the boats at double time down to the river's edge, launch them and paddle across. That, too, worried Cook. From the little he had learned, each craft weighed about 200 pounds; when they were loaded with the men's equipment and ammunition, that figure would probably double.

Once launched, each boat would carry thirteen paratroopers and a crew of three engineers to row the men across. The operation would be continuous. In wave after wave the assault craft were to cross back

and forth until the whole of Cook's battalion and part of another, under Captain John Harrison, were across. Major Edward G. Tyler of the Irish Guards, whose tanks were to give fire support, was appalled by the whole concept. "It put the fear of God in me," Tyler recalls. He asked the cigar-chewing Colonel Tucker if his men had ever practiced this kind of operation before. "No," Tucker replied laconically. "They're getting on-the-job training."

From the ninth floor of the power plant, Cook and Lieutenant Colonel Giles Vandeleur, commanding the Irish Guards' 2nd Battalion, observed the north shore through binoculars. Directly across from where they stood, flat ground ran inland from the river's edge for 200 to 800 yards. Cook's men would have to cross this unprotected stretch after they landed. Beyond the level shore, a sloping dike embankment rose some 15 to 20 feet high, and topping it was a 20-foot-wide road running west to east. A squat building, called Fort Hof Van Holland, stood about 800 yards beyond the road. Cook and Vandeleur could clearly see enemy troops in position along the top of the embankment, and they were almost sure that observation and artillery posts were positioned inside the fort. "Somebody," Cook remembers thinking, "has come up with a real nightmare." Yet, effective H-Hour air and artillery support could soften the German resistance and enable the troopers to command the northern bank quickly. Cook was counting heavily on that support.

Vandeleur thought the crossing might prove "ghastly, with heavy casualties." But he intended his tanks to support the Americans to the utmost. He planned to use about thirty Sherman tanks--two squadrons under command of Major Edward G. Tyler and Major Desmond FitzGerald. At 2:30 P.M., the tanks were to move toward the river and mount the embankment, "track-to-track," their 75 mm. guns lined up to pound the far shore. This British bombardment would be reinforced by the 82nd's mortar and artillery fire. In all, 100 guns would batter the northern bank.

Cook's men, who had not seen the actual assault area as yet, had taken the briefing in their stride. But the width of the river shocked everyone. "At first when we were briefed, we thought they were joking," recalls Second Lieutenant John Holabird. "It all sounded too fantastic." Sergeant Theodore Finkbeiner, scheduled for the first wave, was sure that "our chances were pretty good because of the smoke screen." But Captain T. Moffatt Burriss, commander of I Company, believed the plan was nothing short of a suicide mission.

So did the 504th's Protestant chaplain, Captain Delbert Kuehl. Normally Kuehl would not have gone in with assault troops. Now he requested permission to be with Cook's men. "It was the hardest decision I ever made," he recalls, "because I was going on my own volition. The plan seemed absolutely impossible, and I felt if ever the men needed me, it would be on this operation."

Captain Henry Baldwin Keep, who was known as the battalion's millionaire because he was a member of the Philadelphia Biddle family, considered that "the odds were very much against us. In eighteen months of almost steady combat we had done everything from parachute jumps to establishing bridgeheads to acting as mountain troops and as regular infantry. But a river crossing was something else! It sounded impossible."

Cook, according to Lieutenant Virgil Carmichael, tried to lighten the atmosphere by announcing that he would imitate George Washington by "standing erect in the boat and, with clenched right fist pushed forward, shout, 'Onward, men! Onward!'" Captain Carl W. Kappel, commander of H Company, who had heard that the Arnhem attack was in trouble, was deeply concerned. He wanted "to get in the damn boat and get the hell across." He had a good friend in the British 1st Airborne, and he felt if anyone was on the Arnhem bridge it was "Frosty"--Colonel John Frost.

By 2 P.M. there was still no sign of the assault craft, and now it was too late to recall the approaching squadrons of Typhoons. Back of the jump-off site, hidden behind the river embankment, Cook's men and Vandeleur's tanks waited. At precisely 2:30 P.M., the Typhoon strike began. Flashing overhead, the planes peeled off and screamed down, one after another, shooting rockets and machine-gun fire at the enemy positions. Ten minutes later, as Vandeleur's tanks began taking up positions on the embankment, the three trucks carrying the assault craft arrived. With only twenty minutes to go, Cook's men saw, for the first time, the flimsy collapsible green boats.

Each boat was nineteen feet long with a flat, reinforced plywood bottom. The canvas sides, held in place by wooden pegs, measured thirty inches from floor to gunwales. Eight paddles, four feet long, were supposed to accompany each boat, but in many there were only two. Men would have to use their rifle butts to paddle.

Quickly engineers began assembling the boats. As each was put together, the paratroopers assigned to the craft loaded their equipment on board and got ready to dash for the bank. Against the deafening din of the barrage now lashing the far shore, the twenty-six boats were finally assembled. "Somebody yelled, 'Go!'" First Lieutenant Patrick Mulloy recalls, "and everybody grabbed the gunwales and started to lug the boats down to the river." From the rear, shells screamed over the men's heads; tank guns barked from the embankment ahead of them, and white smoke, "looking fairly thick" to Mulloy, drifted over the width of the river. The assault was on.

As the first wave of some 260 men--two companies, H and I, plus headquarters staff and engineers--got to the water the launching immediately began to assume the proportions of a disaster. Boats put

into too-shallow water bogged down in the mud and would not budge. Struggling and thrashing in the shallows, men carried them to deeper parts, pushed them out and then climbed in. As some troopers tried to hoist themselves aboard, their boats overturned. Other boats, overloaded, were caught by the current and began circling out of control. Some sank under their heavy loads. Paddles were lost; men fell overboard. Captain Carl Kappel saw the scene as one "of mass confusion." His boat began to founder. "Private Legacie was in the water and starting to go down," Kappel remembers. Diving in after him, Kappel was surprised at the swiftness of the current. He was able to grab Legacie and pull him to safety "but by the time I got him to the bank I was an old man and worn out." Jumping into another boat Kappel started out again. First Lieutenant Tom MacLeod's craft was almost awash, and he thought they were sinking. "Paddles were flaying like mad," he remembers, and all he could hear above the din was Cook's voice, from a nearby boat, yelling, "Keep going! Keep going!"

The Major, a devout Catholic, was also praying out loud. Lieutenant Virgil Carmichael noticed that he had developed a kind of cadence with each line. "Hail Mary--full of Grace--Hail Mary--full of Grace," Cook chanted with every stroke of the paddle. Then, in the midst of the confusion, the Germans opened up.

The fire was so intense and concentrated that it reminded Lieutenant Mulloy of "the worst we ever took at Anzio. They were blazing away with heavy machine guns and mortars, most of it coming from the embankment and the railroad bridge. I felt like a sitting duck." Chaplain Kuehl was sick with horror. The head of the man sitting next to him was blown off. Over and over Kuehl kept repeating, "Lord, Thy will be done."

From his command post in the PGEM building, Lieutenant Colonel Vandeleur, along with General Browning and General Horrocks, watched in grim silence. "It was a horrible, horrible sight," Vandeleur remembers. "Boats were literally blown out of the water. Huge geysers shot up as shells hit and small-arms fire from the northern bank made the river look like a seething cauldron." Instinctively men began to crouch in the boats. Lieutenant Holabird, staring at the fragile canvas sides, felt "totally exposed and defenseless." Even his helmet "seemed about as small as a beanie."

Shrapnel ripped through the little fleet. The boat carrying half of First Lieutenant James Megallas' platoon sank without a trace. There were no survivors. First Lieutenant Allen McLain saw two craft blown apart and troopers thrown into the water. Around Captain T. Moffatt Burriss' boat fire was coming down "like a hailstorm," and finally the engineer steering the boat said, "Take the rudder. I'm hit." His wrist was shattered. As Burriss leaned over to help, the engineer was hit again, this time in the head. Shell fragments caught Burriss in the

side. As the engineer fell overboard, his foot caught the gunwale, causing his body to act like a rudder and swinging the boat around. Burris had to heave the dead man into the water. By then two more troopers sitting in front had also been killed.

Under a brisk wind the smoke screen had been blown to tatters. Now German gunners raked each boat individually. Sergeant Clark Fuller saw that some men, in their haste to get across quickly, and desperately trying to avoid the fire, "rowed against each other, causing their boats to swing around in circles." The Germans picked them off easily. Fuller was "so scared that he felt paralyzed." Halfway across, Private Leonard G. Tremble was suddenly slammed into the bottom of the boat. His craft had taken a direct hit. Wounded in the face, shoulder, right arm and left leg, Tremble was sure he was bleeding to death. Taking water, the boat swung crazily in circles, then drifted slowly back to the southern shore, everyone in it dead but Tremble.

In the command post Vandeleur saw that "huge gaps had begun to appear in the smoke screen." His tankers had fired smoke shells for more than ten minutes, but now the Guardsmen were running low on every kind of ammunition. "The Germans had switched ammunition and were beginning to use big stuff, and I remember almost trying to will the Americans to go faster. It was obvious that these young paratroopers were inexperienced in handling assault boats, which are not the easiest things for maneuver. They were zigzagging all over the water."

Then the first wave reached the northern bank. Men struggled out of the boats, guns firing, and started across the exposed flat land. Sergeant Clark Fuller, who a few minutes before had been paralyzed with fear, was so happy to be alive that he felt "exhilarated. My fear had been replaced by a surge of recklessness. I felt I could lick the whole German army" Vandeleur, watching the landing, "saw one or two boats hit the beach, followed immediately by three or four others. Nobody paused. Men got out and began running toward the embankment. My God, what a courageous sight it was! They just moved steadily across that open ground. I never saw a single man lie down until he was hit. I didn't think more than half the fleet made it across." Then, to Vandeleur's amazement, "the boats turned around and started back for the second wave." Turning to Horrocks, General Browning said, "I have never seen a more gallant action."

As Julian Cook's assault craft neared the beach he jumped out and pulled the boat, eager to get ashore. Suddenly to his right he saw a bubbling commotion in the gray water. "It looked like a large air bubble, steadily approaching the bank," he remembers. "I thought I was seeing things when the top of a helmet broke the surface and continued on moving. Then a face appeared under the helmet. It was the little machine-gunner, Private Joseph Jedlicka. He had bandoliers of 30-caliber machine-gun bullets draped around his shoulders and a box

in either hand." Jedlicka had fallen overboard in eight feet of water and, holding his breath, had calmly walked across the river bottom until he emerged.

* * * * *

Major Julian Cook knew his losses were appalling, but he had no time to assess them now. His companies had landed every where along the exposed stretch of beach. Units were inextricably mixed up and, for the time, without organization. The Germans were flaying the beach with machine-gun fire, yet his stubborn troopers refused to be pinned down. Individually and in twos and threes they headed for the embankment, "It was either stay and get riddled or move," Cook remembers. Struggling forward, the men, armed with machine guns, grenades and fixed bayonets, charged the embankment and viciously dug the Germans out. Sergeant Theodore Finkbeiner believes he was one of the first to reach the high dike roadway. "I stuck my head over the top, and stared right into the muzzle of a machine gun," he recalls. He ducked, but "the muzzle blast blew my helmet off." Finkbeiner tossed a grenade into the German emplacement, heard the explosion and the sound of men screaming. Then he quickly hoisted himself up onto the embankment road and headed for the next machine-gun nest.

Captain Moffatt Burriss had no time to think about the shrapnel wound in his side. When he landed he was "so happy to be alive that I vomited." He ran straight for the dike, yelling to his men to get "one machine gun firing on the left flank, another on the right." They did. Burriss saw several houses back of the dike. Kicking the door of one open, he surprised "several Germans who had been sleeping, apparently unaware of what was happening." Reaching quickly for a hand grenade, Burriss pulled the pin, threw it into the room and slammed the door.

(From Cornelius Ryan, A Bridge Too Far, pp. 458-465.)

* * * * *

The seizure of the Remagen bridgehead over the Rhine on 7 March 1945 was of critical importance to the Allied forces. Its capture owed much to good combat leadership by junior officers.

On the surface, [Lieutenant] Karl Timmermann tried to treat his mission as if it were a big lark. This was part of his art of leadership. While giving orders to his three platoon leaders, he casually passed out some candy he had "liberated" in Remagen. "Here, try one of these Kraut rock candies, and don't break your teeth," he said with a flip to Forrest Miner, an assistant squad leader at the edge of the group.

"Now we're going to cross this bridge before--"

A deafening rumble and roar swallowed up the rest of Timmermann's sentence. The German Sergeant Faust had set off the emergency demolition two-thirds of the way across the bridge. Able Company watched in awe as the huge structure lifted up, and steel, timbers, dust and thick black smoke mixed in the air. Many of the G.I.'s threw themselves to the ground or buried their faces in their hands.

"Thank God, now we won't have to cross that damned thing," Mike Chinchar said fervently, trying to reassure himself.

Johnny Ayres fingered the two grenades hooked onto the rings of his pack suspenders, and nodded his head: "We wouldn't have had a chance."

But Timmermann, who had been trying to make out what was left of the bridge through the thick haze, yelled:

"Look--she's still standing!"

Most of the smoke and dust had cleared away, and the men followed their commander's gaze. The sight of the bridge still spanning the Rhine brought no cheers from the men. It was like an unwelcome specter. The suicide mission was on again.

A thousand feet away, the German soldiers were working frantically around the far end of the bridge. They looked as if they were going to make another attempt to blow the bridge.

"Maybe they're just teasing us to get us out there and then blow us all to kingdom come," Sabia said. "I tell ya it's a trap."

Timmermann's casual air had disappeared. He had thrown away his candy and the grin was gone from his face as he strode up to the bridge. He saw at one glance that although some big holes had been blown in the flooring of the bridge, the catwalks were clear for infantrymen. The Germans were still in a frenzy of activity on the other side and on the bridge itself.

He quickly circled his arm in the air to call his platoon leaders together. Other men clustered around, eager and apprehensive. "O.K., Jim, Mike and Joe, we'll cross the bridge--order of march, first platoon, third platoon and then second platoon."

There was a moment of silence.

Timmermann turned to Burrows, cupped his hand, and said in a low tone: "Jim, I want your platoon to bring up the rear so we have an officer in charge of the last platoon across." Then, in a louder tone which everybody could hear: "And when you get over, Jim, take your

platoon up that high hill on the other side. You know, the old Fort Benning stuff: take the high ground and hold it?"

There was no sudden rush to cross the bridge. To the tired, dirty, unshaven men it looked like sudden death. Stomachs were queasy, not only from some wine discovered in Remagen, but from fear.

Timmermann moved tentatively up to the bridge, and started to wave his arm overhead in the traditional "Follow me" gesture. A chattering of machine guns from the towers made him duck. Jack Berry ran up to one of the General Pershing tanks, located Lieutenant Jack Grimball, and pointed at the towers.

Grimball did not hesitate. His Pershing let loose a blast.

Mike Chinchar, leader of the platoon ordered to spearhead the crossing, was knocked off his feet by the concussion. So was Dean Craig. Chinchar and Craig had their faces buried in the mud by the blast. Sabia was lifted off his feet, and shook his head dazedly. Berry laughed uncontrollably as the trio staggered around, spitting out mud and trying to regain their equilibrium.

The tank shell opened a big crack in the tower, and the German machine-gun fire let up.

"Dammit, what's holdin' up the show? Now git goin'!" Timmermann yelled.

Big Tony Samele, who had been in the lead while the first platoon was cleaning out Remagen, turned to his platoon leader, Mike Chinchar: "C'mon, Mike, we'll just walk it across." At this point, the battalion commander, Major Murray Deevers, called out: I'll see you on the other side and we'll all have a chicken dinner."

"Chicken dinner, my foot. I'm all chicken right now," one of the men in the first platoon shot back.

Major Deevers flushed. "Move on across," he yelled, sharply.

"I tell ya, I'm not going' out there and get blown up," the G.I. answered. "No sir, major, you can court-martial and shoot me, but I ain't going out there on that bridge."

While Deevers was arguing, Lieutenant Timmermann was using more direct methods: "Get goin', you guys, git goin'." He moved onto the bridge himself.

Chinchar shouted at Art Massie: "You leapfrog me up as far as that hole that's blown out." Massie had a quick and natural reaction: "I don't wanna but I will."

As they started out onto the bridge, suddenly the man who had been arguing with Major Deevers turned away from Deevers and joined the group from the first platoon which was moving across.

Timmermann's men had just started out onto the bridge when Lieutenant Mott and Sergeants Dorland and Reynolds of the engineers ran out to join them and started cutting wires connected to the demolition charges. The engineers were a doubly welcome sight, because the infantrymen had not expected them. When the big German emergency charge had gone off on the bridge Mott had decided that the main job of his engineers would be to locate and cut the wires to the other demolition charges. The three men joined Timmermann and his lead scouts just as they were starting across the bridge, and there was no time to coordinate any plans as the whole group surged forward.

The right side of the bridge was torn up by the German blasts, and so Chinchar's platoon started down the left catwalk. Here the men had some protection because most of the German rifle and machine-gun fire was coming from the stone tower on the far right end of the bridge. The fire had quieted down after Grimbail's tank blast, but it started up again as the first infantrymen picked their way across.

When Chinchar's men were about a third of the way over, they came to a halt as the machine-gun fire intensified. The American tanks were still firing, but the German return fire from both the towers and the tunnel was growing stronger. Nobody dared move ahead.

From a half-submerged barge about two hundred yards upstream, the lead troops were getting more fire. It was not heavy and constant, but two snipers on the barge were beginning to zero in. There were no American tanks on the bridge, and so Timmermann ran back to yell to one of the General Sherman tanks at the bridge approach:

"How about putting something on that barge?"

The tank found the range and blasted the barge with its 75-millimeter gun until a white flag began to flutter.

"That's one thing they never taught us at Fort Knox," said a member of the tank crew later in reviewing his naval exploit.

Even with the barge menace removed, Timmermann faced a crisis. He ran forward to find that his old first platoon was frozen. The tank support was not silencing the opposition. The Germans were still running around on the far side of the river as though they were going to blow the bridge with the American troops on it. Timmermann waved for Sergeant DeLisio, leader of the third platoon.

"Joe, get your platoon up there and get these men off their tail," he yelled above the clatter of tank and machine-gun fire.

The little Bronx sergeant with the twitching mustache started weaving and bobbing across the bridge. One of the motionless figures hugging the flooring of the bridge grumbled as he passed:

"There goes a guy with more guts than sense."

If DeLisio heard him he gave no sign. Soon the rest of his platoon was starting over, and in a minute a few men from Burrows' second platoon had started also.

The reinforcements fired at the tunnel and the towers, and soon the enemy fire began to lessen.

Forrest Miner came up behind one of the men on the bridge and yelled:

"What's holding you guys up?"

"Don't you hear that machine-gun fire?"

"Fer cryin' out loud," Miner lied, "that's our own machine-gun fire coming from behind us."

The man looked incredulous and then hobbled to his feet with a blank and resigned expression on his face.

Above all the noise came Timmermann's constant: "Git goin', git goin'." The company commander was everywhere, spurring, encouraging, and leading his men.

DeLisio worked his way up to the first man on the bridge, a third of the way across, and shouted: "What's the trouble?"

"Trouble? Chrissakes can't you see all that sniper fire?"

"Why worry about a coupla snipers?" DeLisio laughed. "If this bridge blows up we've got a whole battalion on it. Let's get off. C'mon, guys."

DeLisio, of course, was exaggerating--there wasn't a whole battalion on the bridge, only part of A Company; but the psychology worked.

He helped uncork the attack. Other men with "more guts than sense" started to get up and weave and bob behind him.

Sabia started to run, but the bridge turned into an endless treadmill. His leaden feet got heavier and heavier, and he felt as if he had been running for hours and getting nowhere.

Ayres, his grenades and canteen bobbing up and down, suddenly wished he had not consumed so much wine in Remagen, and he vomited on the bridge. Through a blown-out hole in the bridge flooring he saw the swift current below.

"If I fall," he asked himself, "will this pack drag me under?"

Across the river, a German train steamed into view, chugging south.

Colonel Engeman, back in Remagen with his tanks, spotted the train and joyfully exclaimed: "Hallelujah! I've always wanted to fire a tank at a locomotive." Four or five tanks opened up. The firebox of the engine exploded. German troops started pouring out of the train, and set up positions to fire at their tormenters on the bridge and in Remagen.

DeLisio waved back for his support squad, led by Joe Petrencsik and Alex Drabik. Then he edged forward. Heavy fire started to come down on the bridge--20-millimeter shells from German anti-aircraft guns. Petrencsik with a sudden hunch yelled: "Duck!" DeLisio crouched, and something swooshed over his head and took a piece out of one of the stone towers.

In the middle of the bridge, Mott, Dorland and Reynolds found four packages of TNT, weighing 20 to 30 pounds each, tied to I-beams underneath the decking of the bridge. They climbed down and worked their wirecutters hot until the charges splashed into the Rhine. Above them they heard the heavy tramp of the infantrymen and the hoarse cry of Timmermann which everybody had now taken up: "Git goin'."

Back on the bridge, Dorland started to hack away at a heavy cable.

"Why don't you shoot it in two with your carbine?" Jack Berry asked.

Dorland put the muzzle up against the cable, and blasted it apart.

By this time DeLisio had traveled two-thirds of the way across the bridge. The little sergeant had a theory that if you advanced fast enough you wouldn't get hit, so instead of hugging the bridge when the Germans fired on him from the towers, he simply ran on until he got behind the towers on the German side of the bridge. DeLisio chortled to himself at his good luck, until he looked back and saw that the German fire from the towers was still pinning down the men who were supposed to be following him.

Somebody yelled:

"Who's gonna clean out that tower?"

DeLisio took the question as a challenge, and ran back to the tower where most of the fire was coming from.

He pushed aside a few bales of hay blocking the door to the tower. Just as he started into the door, a stray bullet went into the stone wall and ricocheted off. Sabia came up and yelled: "You're hit, Joe."

"You're crazy, Sabia. I don't feel nothin' at all."

Sabia insisted: "I saw that bullet, I tell ya I seen it go right through ya."

DeLisio ran his hands quickly around his field jacket, and finding no blood he brushed Sabia away and went on up into the tower.

Chinchar, Samele, and Massie then went up into the left tower. Everybody else moved forward. Many of them recalled what Nelson Wegener, DeLisio's old platoon sergeant, used to say after nearly every battle: "Guinea, you're one of the luckiest men alive. I dunno how you do it, but you always seem to get out of the toughest scrapes."

DeLisio started running up the circular staircase. There were three floors in the tower, and he couldn't take anything for granted. He heard machine-gun fire above him, and then it suddenly stopped. Had the Germans heard him coming, and was he heading into a trap?

He slapped open a steel door with the heel of his hand and burst in on three German soldiers. They were bending over a machine gun, as though it were jammed. There was an agonizing second as the three men jerked their heads around. DeLisio pumped out a couple of shots with his carbine, firing from the hip.

"Hande hoch!" he yelled.

The three Germans wheeled around with their hands in the air. DeLisio motioned them to one side with his carbine, and seizing the gun they had been using he hurled it out of the window. Men starting across the bridge saw the gun plummet from the tower and began to move with more confidence.

In his pidgin German and his sign language, DeLisio tried to find out if there were any more soldiers left in the tower. His captives assured him that there weren't. But DeLisio was skeptical and he motioned for them to precede him up the stairs.

On the top floor of the tower, DeLisio pushed the three Germans into a room, where he found a German lieutenant and his orderly. The lieutenant dived for the corner of the room, but DeLisio stopped him with a couple of shots. He took away the lieutenant's Walther pistol.

Then he marched all five prisoners down the stairs and told them to proceed unescorted over the bridge to Remagen. They were the first in a long parade of German prisoners taken near the bridge.

Over in the left tower, Chinchar, Samele and Massie also tossed a German machine gun out the window and captured one cowering soldier. The flushing of the towers cost all of those involved the honor of being the first across the Rhine.

Alex Drabik, one of DeLisio's assistant squad leaders, had not seen him go into the tower and started looking for his platoon leader. He asked several people on the bridge, but nobody seemed to know. He made up his mind that there was only one thing to do.

"Let's go!" he shouted. "DeLisio must be over there on the other side all alone."

Drabik took off for the east bank, weaving and wobbling. Just before he got across the bridge he jounced so much that he lost his helmet. He did not stop to pick it up but kept running at top speed until he became the first soldier to cross the Rhine.

At Drabik's heels came the Minnesota plasterer named Marvin Jensen, repeating: "Holy crap, do you think we'll make it, do you think we'll make it?"

Drabik was the first man over, followed closely by Jensen, Samele, DeLisio, Chinchar, Massie, Sabia, a Missourian named Martin Reed and a North Carolinian named Joseph Peoples. A few seconds later Karl Timmermann, the first officer over, set foot on the German side of the Rhine.

(From Kenneth W. Hechler, The Bridge at Remagen, pp. 137-145.)

* * * * *

There is probably no occasion where good leadership is at such a premium than when an organization is experiencing unexpected reverses. Such was the case for the American forces during the German Ardennes Offensive in December 1944, which became known as the Battle of the Bulge. The battle was a crucible for leaders, forging the best into even better and destroying those who did not measure up, often along with their units.

An officer who did measure up and who led soldiers with some success and much ingenuity so long as they kept their nerve and followed him was Lieutenant Eric Wood of the 589th Artillery, "one of the few units to come through this battle with its reputation unimpaired," according to one historian of the battle.

Lieutenant Eric Wood, Battery A's executive officer and a former Princeton football player, rushed toward a hillock on the battery's left flank where he could see the Germans. "NUMBER FOUR GUN--FIRE!"

he roared. The first shot struck home and the tank went up in a bright ball of flame. Crazy its white tracer ammunition zigzagged into the sky.

Moments later it was a blazing wreck.

A German assault gun took up the challenge. The American cannoneers, using the shortest possible fuse, aimed and fired again. The solid armor-penetrating shot clanged metallicly against the steel side of the German vehicle. There was a muffled crump. The Germans started to bale out. A man ran screaming toward the American lines, his uniform on fire. Somebody gave him a burst from a "grease gun" and, mercifully, he fell.

Other howitzers joined the battle, while cannoneers armed with bazookas crept forward and tried to knock out the German tanks. Wood, meanwhile, reacted to the challenge of the German infantry following the armored vehicles. He snapped a quick order at the crew of number four, and the cannoneers changed their ammunition. Using short-time fuses they swept the area with shells. Bursting in the trees and in the air, the steel splinters played havoc with the ranks of the German infantry.

To Wood's right there was a loud crump. And another. The air was filled with the howl of German multiple mortars--the feared "moaning minnie." "Hit the deck!" Wood yelled and threw himself to the ground. The crews needed no urging. Everywhere the Germans were retreating, leaving behind them the burning wrecks of three armored vehicles, and a score of dead. This now was their revenge. Within an hour thirty-six men of Battery A were dead.

(From Charles Whiting, Decision at St.-Vith, pp. 48ff.)

Now cut off and isolated, the 589th has had to fight off attacks throughout the day and it becomes obvious that the battalion will have to withdraw. One battery's howitzers were already destroyed as they were mired in the mud and could not be extracted. The other two batteries are now manhandling their howitzers onto the road as the narrative resumes.

. . .the battalion set off, leaving behind Lieutenant Wood, the hero of the previous day's action, who was trying to get a damaged howitzer onto the road. Desperately the big burly lieutenant and his sergeant, Sergeant Scannapico, plus eleven enlisted men, sweated and cursed as they wrestled the damaged piece out on the mud and onto the road. After about half an hour they were successful, but they found that now they were completely alone in enemy-held territory.

Ex-football player Wood was not dismayed. "Let's get started," he ordered and swung himself up in the cab of the towing vehicle next to Sergeant Scannapico and T/S Kroll, who was driving.

With the engine roaring, they careened down the steep hill into enemy-held Schonberg, the cannon bouncing up and down crazily behind them. Suddenly the sergeant spotted an enemy Tiger tank. "Lieutenant," he yelled above the roar of the motor, "Kraut tank!"

Instinctively Kroll took his foot off the accelerator.

"Go on!" Wood roared.

Kroll put his foot down. They charged on.

Wood grabbed his carbine. "When I yell stop," he shouted above the noise of the motor, "hit the brakes!"

Kroll nodded, his eyes on the metal monster with its great hooded gun protruding in front of his chassis. Scannapico gritted his teeth.

"NOW!" Wood bellowed.

The prime mover lurched to a sudden stop. The two men in the cab jumped out. Behind them the crew followed suit. Private Campagna ran forward with his bazooka. He aimed. There was a crump of explosive. A stream of red flame shot out from the bazooka, followed by a dull metallic thump. Suddenly the long tank gun dropped, as if something had snapped within the metallic monster. "We got him!" someone yelled happily.

But there was no time to waste on congratulations. From somewhere between the white-painted stone houses, a machine gun began to chatter.

"Mount up!" Wood ordered. "Let's go!"

Kroll needed no urging. He let out the clutch. The clumsy prime mover lurched forward. Wood swung himself into the cab. The bridge, and beyond that the road to St.-Vith, loomed ahead. Once over it they were safe. Would they make it?

They swung over the bridge. Small-arms fire began to patter against the metal sides of their vehicle. Kroll braked to a stop. Without waiting for orders, Sergeant Scannapico jumped out. Campagna with his bazooka followed.

Seventy-five yards away, down a narrow alley to their right, they spotted another German tank.

Wildly Campagna fired. His round missed by a good ten yards.

But there was no answering fire from the German.

Scannapico did not wait to ask why. "Back to the vehicle!" he ordered.

Swiftly the two men pelted after the prime mover, which had begun to move forward again. Campagna swung himself aboard, throwing his clumsy weapon in front of him.

The sergeant was unlucky.

While the men in the back of the vehicle watched in horrified fascination, Scannapico was hit by a bullet. His face contorted with pain, he staggered on a few feet more, his arms held out as if he were appealing to them for assistance.

Then he was struck again. He fell. Sergeant Scannapico lay still in the middle of the road. He was dead.

The prime mover, weighed down by the heavy load of the howitzer, cleared the bridge. To the Americans' right was a little stream and to their left the few remaining houses of the village. Inaccurate German fire struck them from the direction of the last house, a Gasthaus. But it didn't impede their progress. Noisily they roared on in second gear.

Now they had left the last house behind them. In front of the tense men lay a slight incline and then safety. It seemed they were going to make it.

They cleared the rise. With a crash, Kroll's foot hit the brake. Less than a hundred yards away a German Mark IV tank barred the way. "Bail out!" Wood ordered.

Madly the crew threw themselves off the vehicle and dived into the ditch.

Not a moment too soon.

The Mark IV swung its 75mm around. There was a flat crack. A stream of flame and smoke shot from its long hooded muzzle. The prime mover's cab was struck squarely with loud, booming echo. Kroll slumped over his shattered wheel, blood streaming from his face.

Desperately Wood cast around for some way of attacking the Mark IV. In his haste Campagna had abandoned his bazooka. All the crew had were their side arms and a couple of M1's. Small-arms fire was starting to come from the woods to their right. The tank began to depress its gun.

"What we gonna do, Lieutenant?" someone yelled.

Wood had no time to answer the question. Another artilleryman was beginning to get slowly to his feet.

For a moment Wood thought the man was crazy. His lips were already forming the words "Get down," when the private started to raise his arms.

For one long moment the officer could not understand what the soldier was up to. Then he understood. He was surrendering.

And he was not alone. Hesitantly, other men started to follow his example. A man next to Wood threw down his carbine and took off his helmet. He raised his hands even though he was still kneeling.

"Hey now, cut that out," Wood began, but stopped short. A few yards ahead, an officer from another outfit which had been ambushed by the Mark IV was also raising his hands. Wood knew that he had only a few moments to decide. German P.O.W. camp for the rest of the war or-- He threw a glance at the woods. They were about a hundred yards away but he was in good shape and he had pulled off one or two spectacular runs when he had played for Princeton.

German infantry, rifles held suspiciously at their hips, were beginning to come out of the woods to take the American surrender.

The young officer hesitated no longer. Sucking in a deep gulp of air, he flung himself out of the ditch and began to run.

For one long moment there was no German reaction. The advancing infantry were probably too surprised that any one should attempt to make a break for it. Then they opened up. Angrily a Schmeisser stitched a pattern of lead in the snow at his heels. But he wasn't to be stopped.

Twisting and turning as if he were back on the football fields of his pre-war days, Wood sprinted across the open field with every German weapon paying him full attention.

Fifty yards. Forty. Thirty. The German fire missed him time and again. Fifteen. Ten. With his chest heaving uncontrollably, his mouth wide open as he gasped for air, the big soldier flung himself head first into the trees. He had made it.

(From *ibid.*, pp. 67-70.)

Although Lieutenant Wood no longer had soldiers to lead, or at least those stragglers he could persuade to follow him, his instincts were those of an effective combat leader to the end. Finding shelter with some friendly Belgians, he tries to make his way back to his unit.

Schroeder warned the big American that the area was completely overrun by Germans and that "there's great battle all around St.-Vith. From our windows you can see it--burning."

But Wood did not allow himself to be discouraged. He told Schroeder, "I'll fight my way back to my outfit or I'll collect some American stragglers and start a small war of my own."

That night he slept in Maraite's double bed.

Next morning he woke refreshed. Even a German V bomb which dropped close by didn't disturb his sleep. Maraite's daughter Eva gave him and the little soldier a packet of sandwiches and they disappeared "with our prayers," as Maraite said. That was the last time that anyone saw Lieutenant Eric Wood alive.

From the statements taken from the villagers after the war, it is clear that Wood established himself as a partisan in the deep woods outside the village, either fighting alone or drawing men from the 120-odd Americans who the Germans told the villagers were still holding out on Adesberg Hill north of the village.

At all events, soon after he had left Meyerode things began to happen. To provide maximum cover from U.S. air attacks, the Germans diverted as much traffic as possible through the wood behind Meyerode. Pressing the village's six-horse snowplow into service, the Germans kept the road open throughout the month.

But these convoys soon began to be ambushed. Sepp Dietrich, commander of the Sixth SS Panzer Army, quartered in the Burgermeister's house, started to curse the "Ami criminal scoundrels and bandits" who were playing havoc with his supplies. Virtually every day the Germans brought wounded into the village and told the villagers they had been attacked by Americans led by a young officer "very big and powerful of body and brave of spirit." How he lived, no one knew. There was an abandoned dump at a trail-crossing just a mile south of Mayerode. There, after the battle, the villagers found plenty of K-rations. Perhaps Wood and his men (if there were any men) got their supplies there, or perhaps they got them from the Germans they attacked. No one will ever know now. For none of them survived.

On the late afternoon of January 23, 1945, the Burgermeister of Meyerode sent out his cousin August Pauels and Servatius Maraite to look for the Americans now that the battle was over. Everywhere they found grim signs of the slaughter that had gone on in the woods. They found German graves and unburied dead in large numbers (200 in all when they came to count later), and abandoned, burnt-out vehicles from Meyerode to Herresbach. Then they found Wood.

He was stretched out in the snow at the crossroads where he had first met the little man. Around him were the bodies of several Germans. That no living German had ever visited the spot was proved by the fact that his pocketbook still contained four thousand Belgian francs. Sadly the villagers buried him where he had died in the woods. And ironically they wrote his epitaph in German:

Eric Fisher Wood
Capt. US Army
fand hier den Heldentod
nach schweren Einzelkämpfen.

["found here a hero's death
after unsparing singlehanded combat."]

(From *ibid.*, pp. 98-99.)

If Lieutenant Wood's instincts and actions were those of the successful leader, other officers in the Ardennes showed the characteristics of the unsuccessful leader as quickly and spectacularly in their own way.

. . . Colonel Mark Devine, commander of the 14th Cavalry Group, was driving along the Born-Poteau road. What exactly he was doing on the road is unclear. The divisional historian of the 106th, Colonel Dupuy, says he was on a reconnaissance; [Hugh M.] Cole, the official historian of the battle, says simply, "Colonel Devine departed with most of his staff for the 106th Division command post," giving no reason for his journey.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

[In the course of the journey,] they ran into a group of men standing at the roadside.

Dugan was the first to react. Just as he reached for his pistol, assuming the men were German, a splatter of small-arms fire hit the staff car. The car swerved wildly across the road. Driver and passengers flung themselves into the ditch.

But the Germans (if they were in reality Germans) did not press their advantage. Using the opportunity, the command group scattered and began to make their separate ways back to the new group CP at Poteau. When he finally got there, Colonel Devine was obviously very badly shaken. Muttering something about "checking with HQ," he turned over his group to another officer and left.

Sometime after dark he burst into General Jones's office in St.-Vith. "The Germans are right behind us!" he exclaimed excitedly. "They've broken through in the north. My group is practically destroyed!"

Jones, who was discussing the situation with General Clarke of 7th Armored CCB, was shocked. A full colonel breaking up like this! For a moment he did not know how to react.

Clarke was quicker off the mark. "Why don't you send the Colonel back to Bastogne," he suggested diplomatically. "He could report the situation to General Middleton. . ."

And that is the last that is heard of Colonel Mark Devine of the 14th Cavalry Group. The U.S. official history of the campaign is discretely silent about what happened at Bastogne. Other commentators maintain that the colonel suffered a "nervous breakdown" and leave it at that. Merriam, who was present at the battle and does not pull his punches, is unequivocal. He writes bluntly:

The group commander (i.e. Devine) withdrew his troops without orders from the 106th Division for which he was relieved.

(From *ibid.*, pp. 70-71.)

A failure as a leader, Colonel George L. Descheneaux offers an intriguing and instructive example for students of combat leadership. Ranking 251 of 262 in his 1932 class at West Point, Descheneaux had attended the regular infantry course at Fort Benning in 1937 and the Command and Staff College at Fort Leavenworth in 1942. His assignments had included routine tours as an infantry company officer for about four years as a Lieutenant near his family in Maine, but without any opportunity to command. He served as aide-camp to a general in Panama for two years, and was the acting battalion commander of a battalion in the 3d Infantry for four months in 1941. In addition, he had served as the acting assistant Adjutant General of the 6th Division for a year and in various operational staff positions at Division and Army level for two years. In June 1944, he became the Commander of the 422d Infantry Regiment of the 106th Division, which he would lead into German captivity in the Ardennes.

A clue to Descheneaux's personality can be gleaned from the *Howitzer*, the Military Academy Yearbook for 1932, where he was described as "indifferent, happy-go-lucky, easy going." Between 1937 and his ordeal by fire in 1944, he had experienced only about twenty months duty with troops, generally in short assignments of eight months or less. He had commanded no unit in his career except for his four months as acting battalion commander in the fall of 1941. His personality traits and his assignment record indicate that he may have been an excellent staff officer; certainly there is nothing to indicate that he had any aptitude or ability to command. He was thirty-five when promoted to Colonel, AUS, in October 1944.

The narrative begins on the eve of the Ardennes Offensive, as the soldiers on the line are eagerly looking forward to the end of the war in Europe, and the New York newspapers are proclaiming the "Last Christmas of the War in Europe!"

But back in the regimental headquarters of the three infantry regiments stationed in the line that day, some of the staff were not so sanguine about the 106th's situation. Colonel George L. Descheneaux, commander of the 422nd Regiment, for instance, was unhappy about his section of the line. On that day the colonel from Maine, one of the youngest full colonels in the Army, was working on a counterattack plan at the little stone house, once owned by a peasant, in the village of Schlausenbach, Germany, which was now his regimental CP. The plan was a result of his own and his superiors' fears.

The day before, General Alan Jones, the divisional commander, and his staff had inspected the rifle regiments in the line, and had not been too happy about their dispositions. Neither had General Perrin, the assistant divisional commander, one of the few senior officers in the new division who had actually seen combat--if as long ago as World War I.

In the main, they had concluded that the rifle regiments had little room to maneuver in the tight little valleys behind the line. In Descheneaux's case, for instance, there were only two decent roads to the rear which could be used in the event of a German attack to withdraw heavy vehicles, such as the prime movers of the 589th Artillery situated on the hill to the rear of his CP; and both these roads ran from south to north, parallel to the line.

Admittedly these were linked by west to east roads, but they were only glorified logging trails that had to be continually shored up by the engineers if they were not to disappear into the mud within a matter of hours under the weight of tanks and other heavy vehicles. As Descheneaux thought about the possibility, he realized (as he was later to tell his regimental staff after the conference was over), "There'll be no retreating for the 422nd." They "would stand and fight where they were," if the need ever arose.

(From *ibid.*, pp. 6-7.)

On 18 December 1944, Colonel Descheneaux and his counterpart in the 423d Infantry, Colonel Cavender, received orders to destroy a panzer unit moving along the Schoenberg-St.-Vith road and then to move on to the west.

. . . The two colonels decided to move off at 10.00 A.M. with their regiments abreast of each other, linked by only a single patrol. Abandoning their defensive positions at last, they were going to attack to their rear, force the Schonberg-St.-Vith road, and with a bit of luck, break through to St.-Vith itself. It was a bold plan, more especially as they did not know the terrain, had little room to maneuver and lacked a joint commander for the six battalions of infantry and one of artillery involved. But being green troops, these considerations did not seem to enter their heads.

The order to move was passed down the chain of command. Men started to break up heavy equipment. Trucks which could not be moved were sabotaged by pouring sugar into the gas tanks and removing the distributor heads. The kitchens were destroyed and, in the case of the 423rd, the wounded were left behind with the medics at the regimental aid station. Soon the hillsides were littered with the personal and military possessions of eight thousand men.

When Colonel Descheneaux had received the message to attack that morning, he had bowed his head and almost sobbed, saying to his operations and intelligence sergeants Loewenguth and Wayne, "My poor men-- they'll be cut to pieces!"

But now his mood picked up. He was going into action for the first time in his whole army career. Personally he took over the lead, guiding his men through the killing terrain, up and down the steep slippery hillsides.

"You're crazy, Colonel," his operations officer panted as the two men started up yet another hillside into the unknown. "You're going to get yourself killed!"

Descheneaux shook his head, trying to conserve his breath. "I've got to be sure we're going in the right direction."

The assembly area for the attack against Schonberg was only three miles away, but the going was too tough and visibility was down to a couple of hundred feet. As a result, only very slow progress was made. Soon the trail was littered with the overcoats abandoned by the sweating GI's.

"We abandoned everything," said one survivor, Captain Roberts of D Company, "except our weapons and ammunition. Ammunition was low and there was no food or water. There was no straggling. Stops were made every few minutes as the advance guard searched every foot of the terrain ahead. No shots were fired in the vicinity of the column where I was."

But soon the lack of knowledge of the terrain and the bad weather began to tell. Men started to go astray and some got lost--either accidentally or deliberately--for good. Some of the officers began to regret that they had abandoned their former secure positions in the Siegfried Line.

Lieutenant Lange of the 2nd Battalion who had returned for some reason, to their old positions, had found them still unoccupied by the enemy. When he informed his battalion commander, Colonel Scales, of this, the latter regretted they had ever set out. It would have been much better to have "fought it out in well dispersed protected dispositions."

A few moments later Colonel Descheneaux approached him and asked, "Where the hell are we?"

Scales didn't know.

By late afternoon the 422nd was lost.

(From *ibid.*, pp. 88-90.)

The 423d quickly met resistance and bogged down. The officers and men were out of shape and exhausted; they fell where they were and did not dig foxholes or organize a defensive perimeter. In the initial order, the regiments had been promised air drops of food, water, and ammunition which never came. Without them, the Regimental Commanders did little to inspire their men to take the required resolute actions which could alone accomplish the mission and save the commands.

In retrospect, far removed from the blood, dirt, cold and confusion of that December, the objective observer is inclined to think that the most severe reverse suffered by American arms in Europe in the last two years of the war was due to the fact that Cavender and Descheneaux felt too much for their men. Unlike Major Whittelsey of the famed Lost Battalion who, when his battalion was cut off in the Argonne Forest in 1918, lost most of his men yet refused to surrender, Cavender and Descheneaux steadfastly set their faces against such measures. They refused to take such casualties. They would sooner surrender.

(From *ibid.*, pp. 108-109.)

As the regiments moved out and were quickly stopped, it became clear to the Germans that the Americans' objective was Schoenberg, and the Germans concentrated there.

When Descheneaux's lead battalion, the 1st, hit the road, the Germans were waiting for them. As Major Moon, 1st Battalion commander, ordered Company C across the road, four German tanks emerged from the forest to the east and opened up at once. Tree bursts and HE showered the frightened infantry with dirt and shrapnel. The first platoon took their lives in their hands and raced at the double across the road. Without any casualties at all, they cleared it and made the heights north of the Ihren Creek.

The rest hesitated. Descheneaux hurried forward and tried to coordinate the attack, but unavailingly. Enemy fire broke out on both sides of the trapped 1st Battalion. The scared infantry buried their heads in the snow. The German tanks rumbled ever closer.

The draw in which we were turned sharply to the right [remembers one of the survivors], and went toward the road, getting smaller and smaller as it went. Small

groups of men were trying to cross the road when the tanks began filling the opening of the draw with fire. . . . Another tank pulled up behind and began to fire at the other end. The slaughter at the end of the valley by the road was bad. . .

D Company set up a .50-caliber machine gun and opened up against the advancing German infantry. A moment later the German artillery zeroed in on them. Within seconds an 88mm shell exploded right in the crew's midst. A bazooka team ran toward the tanks. A burst of machine-gun fire wiped them out before they could launch their first rocket.

We loaded and got ready to fire. When I saw several of our own men walking toward the tanks with their hands up [another survivor remembers], I saw it was useless to fire because I was sure they would kill all those men. We broke up our weapons and surrendered. There were 250 in this group.

Major Moon didn't wait to see what happened. He was not prepared to surrender. Rising to his feet, he raced across the road, followed by his staff and a handful of brave men who wanted to fight on. The 1st Battalion was finished as an effective force.

(From *ibid.*, pp. 118-119.)

Descheneaux, leading a platoon, soon became lost and engaged in a fire-fight with his sister regiment, the 423d.

At 3:30 P.M. the end was approaching on the Schnee Eifel. By now almost 10,000 Americans were hemmed into a few square miles of woods near Schonberg. As German artillery and mortar fire concentrated on this small area, the mass of trapped men miled around in confusion, ignorance, and terror. Scouts were sent out to find an escape route. But Germans were found on all sides. There could be no escape.

An epic disaster was imminent.

Descheneaux's regiment was still a mile short of its goal, Schonberg. The young colonel and his staff were conferring in a slit trench on the fringe of woods. As they crouched in the 25-foot-long trench, trying to make sense out of conflicting reports, the rumble of tanks came from the north. The rumor again spread that the 7th Armored had finally arrived. There was a moment of desperate hope.

Then tanks poked their noses over the ridge road. Even from a distance they looked too large to be American. They were panzers of the Fuhrer-Escort Brigade. Soon shells from the tanks' 88s exploded in the trees, and the woods became a charnel house for the thousands of Americans as shrapnel rained down.

Descheneaux called together his officers. The dressing station next to the command post in the trench was filling up. The wounded moaned and cried out in pain.

"We're sitting like fish in a pond," said Descheneaux. He was debating with himself. There was no food, no water, no bandages, and little ammunition; but surrender was unthinkable. A litter passed the trench. In it Descheneaux saw his M Company commander, Perkins. One of his legs had been shot off. Blood gushed onto the snow.

He felt sick. "My God," he said, "we're being slaughtered!" His throat was dry. "We can't do anything effective." He looked at the men crouched in the trench with him. "I don't believe in fighting for glory if it doesn't accomplish anything. It looks like we'll have to pack in."

Reluctantly, sadly, they agreed.

There was an embarrassed pause. Then Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Nagle said, "Do you want me to take the white flag?"

Descheneaux nodded.

Nagle, weak from a wound in the back, took the flag. It was the hardest thing he'd ever had to do. He selected a soldier who could speak German. Then under the white banner the two moved cautiously down the hill.

Colonel T. Paine Kelly, commanding officer of Eric Wood's artillery battalion, was digging a foxhole when he heard the report that Descheneaux was surrendering. He hurried to the trench command post.

"Jesus, Desch," he said. "You can't do this! It'll be dark in an hour. Then we can break out to the west."

Descheneaux shook his head slowly.

Kelly looked at him accusingly. "Desch, you can't surrender!"

"No?" Descheneaux was bitter. "What the hell else can I do? You name it."

"But--"

"As far as I'm concerned," said Descheneaux, "I'm going to save the lives of as many as I can. And I don't give a damn if I'm court-martialed." He came out of the trench. "Break up everything you've got," he called. "Break up your guns and pistols."

Several young officers looked at him cold-eyed. It made him feel sick. He didn't know whether it was pity or hate but either way he didn't like it. In a West Point classroom no one surrendered. At here it was different. You finally reached the point where you couldn't shed another drop of another man's blood.

A private looked at Descheneaux with unbelief. The Colonel's personal courage had become legend to the doughs the past three days. He was wherever things were hottest.

"You heard me. Break up your guns and pistols."

The private held up his M-1. "I've carried this goddam thing for months. I've never even fired it once in anger!" Then he viciously swung it at a tree.

Descheneaux started to cry. Hiding his face, he crawled back into the trench.

Soon a young German lieutenant and several grenadiers returned with Nagle. He explained in French what he wanted. Descheneaux, a French-Canadian, replied in French. He saw the grenadiers relieving some of his men of cigarettes and watches. "Let my men keep one pack apiece," he insisted.

The German lieutenant nodded. "Everything will be correct, Colonel."

Soon hundreds of Americans filed down the slope, passing streams of grenadiers, well armed and full of spirit; there were dozens of mortars and light field pieces. Descheneaux turned and looked at the array of arms and men surrounding his hill.

Kelly, behind him, nodded dejectedly. "You were right, Desch," he said. "There was nothing else you could do."

(From John Toland, Battle: The Story of the Bulge, pp. 130-132.)

After Bataan, the mass surrender of the Schnee Eifel was the biggest in American history, some eight or nine thousand (the battle was so confused that the precise number cannot be determined). That not all Descheneaux's soldiers felt that it was inevitable or necessary can be inferred from the reaction of one soldier on the march to the POW camp where Descheneaux would contract tuberculosis:

As fresh German troops marched by and stared at the bearded, filthy columns of American prisoners, who were forced off the road to let them by, men here and there gritted their teeth in bitter anger; but in most cases apathy and sheer weariness had set in. Like sheep they let themselves be ordered back onto the roads, and once again set off on their march to the rear.

In the midst of this mob, Descheneaux marched on unrecognized. He did not feel the cold. His body was hot with the wrath he felt. He was alone in the mob. Earlier that afternoon, just after the regiment had surrendered and they had been formed up into columns by their jubilant captors, an unshaven infantryman of one of his battalions had recognized him. "I've got a message for you, Colonel," the soldier had said.

Descheneaux had looked at him dully.

Sticking out his tongue, the GI gave his former commander a Bronx cheer.

(From Decision at St.-Vith, pp. 145ff.)

Major Don Boyer, part of the advance party of the Combat Command Reserve of the 7th Armored Division, had been ordered to reinforce the embattled units around St. Vith. He had graduated from the Virginia Military Institute in 1938 and was a student at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy when the war broke out. On the way to the developing Bulge, he met the first of the units hurrying to the rear.

. . . the official historian of the 106th, pulls no punches in his account of the retreat:

Let's get down to hard facts. Panic, sheer unreasoning panic, flamed that road all day and into the night. Everyone, it seemed, who had any excuse and many who had none, was going west that day--west from Schonberg, west from St. -Vith too.

Jeeps, trucks, tanks, guns and great lumbering Corps Artillery vehicles which took three-quarters of the road--some of them double-banking. Now and again vehicles were weaving into a third line, now and then crashing into ditches. All this on a two-line highway. And this was what the 7th Armored was bucking as it drove--practically the only eastbound element--to get from Vielsalm to St.-Vith.

Major Don Boyer and his jeep of the CCB advance party hit the retreat just after he passed through Poteau. Forcing his way into the jittery column, he joined its slow crawl, eaten by impatience. Then gradually the column came to a complete halt outside a small village. Voices shouted angry imprecations. Horns honked hysterically. Drivers gunned their motors as loudly as they could.

Fuming with rage, Boyer swung himself out of his jeep and ran forward to where a column of armored vehicles was trying to break into their lane. He spotted an officer wearing a yellow and blue lion patch on his shoulder.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"Hundred and Sixth."

"What's the score then?" he queried contemptuously, noting the fear in the man's wide eyes.

"The Krauts--at least six Panzer divisions--hit us yesterday!" the young officer gasped.

"And what are you doing about it?" Boyer snapped, trying to fight down his anger.

"Me, I'm leaving."

Boyer opened his mouth to say something, then snapped it shut. There was nothing to be gained by arguing with the man. Leaving him standing there, still trying to fight his way into the column on the main road, Boyer hurried back passed the line of snarled vehicles. He swung himself into the jeep.

"What now?" his driver queried.

"Move over, driver," Boyer snapped.

Getting into the driver's seat himself, Boyer swung the wheel round and headed into the nearest field. It looked as if that was the only way he would get anywhere that particular day.

(From *ibid.*, pp. 73-74.)

By that afternoon, he had lost all reserve and was doing whatever he thought it would take to stem the retreat.

On the move now since early morning, the 7th was still well short of its objective. Major Boyer, who had been trying to unsnarl the confused mess of traffic at Vielsalm, gave up in despair and once again took to the fields. After bumping along in this manner for four miles, he came upon the commander of the 31st Tank Battalion who had been ordered by Clarke to attack that afternoon, but was unable to do so because his battalion was mired down in the mud and mass confusion. The bespectacled Boyer, who looked more like teacher than a career tank officer, volunteered to clear the way.

Commandeering a Sherman, he swung onto the road crowded with retreating troops and vehicles. A weapons carrier refused to get out of his way. Boyer didn't hesitate. Behind his mild exterior there was an extremely tough human being. He kicked the driver's helmet three times--the signal for full speed ahead. The tank lurched forward.

The weapons carrier slewed into the ditch in a dismayed attempt to get out of his way.

Boyer pushed on. The column of the 31st Battalion began to move east onto the road behind him. A staff car full of officers tried to jump the column. The high-ranking brass was obviously "bugging out" just like the rest of the disorganized rabble heading west. Boyer jumped down from the turret, full of a cold rage. "Get back! I don't give a damn who you are! Nothing's coming through unless it's going to the front!"

* * * * *

As dusk began to descend on the beleaguered little crossroads town, other elements of the armored division began to follow. Major Boyer, still performing his self-appointed task of guide, was shepherding a lost company into the town when a bullet whistled past his ear.

Boyer flopped into the dirt. From one of the red stone houses near the church someone was sniping. He raised his head cautiously, and glimpsed what he thought was a face at one of the upper windows. It had been a maddening day and Boyer was no longer prepared to take a chance.

Hailing a passing tank, he gave his orders. The tank's 50-caliber machine gun gave the house a long burst of tracer. The bullets curved through the air in a gleeful white and red arc.

Next moment Boyer saw what he took to be a body fall from the window. A motorcycle roared past. Its MP driver was bleeding from a wound in the face.

"What's up?" Boyer asked, recognizing the man as one of the escorts to Colonel Matthews, the divisional chief of staff.

"Ambushed!" the man cried and roared on, as if Hitler himself were just behind.

Boyer was shaken. The balloon was really up. The Germans seemed everywhere and nothing seemed able to stop them. . .

(From *ibid.*, pp. 78-80.)

As the days went by and the offensive continued, Major Boyer accumulated otherwise unengaged soldiers into his own combat command:

To the east of St.-Vith, the ubiquitous Major Don Boyer, the professional-looking intelligence officer, who seemed to be everywhere, had assumed command of two small engineer units who commander had never

turned up. Adding them to his small force of riflemen, he found he had a ragged unit of some 450 men distributed over a series of freezing foxholes.

As he crawled from hole to hole, checking and encouraging his men he saw that they were almost at the end of their tether. They were hungry, tired and short of ammunition, and virtually every one of them was suffering to some degree from the effects of frostbite.

"We're in a tough spot," he told one man sited in a lonely forward outpost deep in the fir forest. "And I feel you should know it. We're like a thumb sticking in Fritz's throat."

The man's reply is not recorded. Perhaps he was one of those killed the following day.

(From *ibid.*, pp. 174-175.)

He continued his forceful and uncompromising leadership until captured:

. . . Boyer was sprinting down the southern flank of his line. He had spotted a platoon, led by a lieutenant, sneaking to the rear.

"Where the hell do you think you're going?" he cried angrily.

"To the rear," said the shaken lieutenant.

"Why?" Boyer glared through his glasses like an angry professor. He raised the muzzle of his M-1 until it stuck in the lieutenant's stomach. "Now turn your platoon around or you'll eat lead."

"But Major," protested the lieutenant.

"I'm going to count ten and then shoot. One. . . two. . ."

"C'mon, Lieutenant," said a short bowlegged sergeant, "let's do what the Major wants."

The platoon went back to its foxholes.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

At 10:50 P.M. Boyer was getting arguments from his men. It was apparent to everyone but him that the situation was hopeless.

"We're not pulling out of here," he said, "until General Clarke gives us the word."

A few moments later he scribbled out a message for Clarke and transmitted it through the artillery network. "Road cut," it read. "At least eight heavy tanks and infantry in town. What are our orders?"

Clarke's answer came almost immediately.

Boyer read it and called in his commanders: Higgins, Holland, and Rogers, the new commander of B Troop of the 87th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron. When they were assembled he looked at the three men, knowing almost exactly what they would say. Then he read the message: "Re-form. Save what vehicles you can; attack to the west through St. Vith; we are forming a new line west of town."

"But my men aren't in shape for an attack," protested Higgins.

"Mine have had it," said Holland.

"Mine too," said Rogers.

Boyer sighed. "I know, I know." He was too tired to argue; besides, he agreed with them. They would be lucky to escape with their lives. But orders were orders. They would retreat and attack. "We'll peel off to the right. Send a messenger to the mortar platoon. Tell them to destroy vehicles but salvage their mortars and tripods."

"That damned tank section supporting me took off already," reported Holland.

"John." Boyer turned to Higgins. "Try to get word across the road to A/23. Tell them what we're doing. Have them peel off to the left through Anstey."

"I have five badly wounded men who can't be moved," said Rogers. "An aid-man has volunteered to stay with them. In the morning he'll try to surrender to a German medic."

Boyer didn't like that, but nothing else could be done. "Tell the medic to stay in the woods until afternoon. If he surrenders to front-line Germans that have been badly hurt it might go rough on the boys." He looked at his watch. It was 11:10 P.M. "Move out in one hour."

"That's too damned late!" objected someone. Someone else said it was too damned early.

"Stow it, we're moving in an hour," said Boyer sharply.

"How about our four prisoners?" asked someone. "Let's kill the bastards."

Boyer shook his head. "You can do anything you damn please to the Krauts--until you take them prisoners. Put gloves on their hands so they won't freeze, then tie them up. The Germans will find them tomorrow morning."

"I say kill them!"

Boyer paid no attention. He turned to Riggins. "You and I'll work our way to the right and pass the word. Let's go, John."

Boyer crawled out of the foxhole and headed south. It was 11:15 P.M.

(From Battle, pp. 180-181, 185-186.)

Major Boyer later broke his forces into small groups to try to exfiltrate and escape capture. He was captured later the next morning.

During the Ardennes Offensive, one of the great American epics of heroism, fortitude in the face of overwhelming odds, and not incidentally of successful combat leadership was recorded at Bastogne. On 19 December,

. . . in Bastogne, Colonel Julian Ewell was just leading the 1st Battalion of his 501st Parachute Regiment out the road toward Neffe. After driving most of the night in open trucks from France, Ewell's men had pulled up cold, tired, and hungry in Bastogne. Since they were the first outfit of the 101st Airborne to arrive, to them fell the first and most hazardous mission.

"Ewell," General McAuliffe had said, pointing to the same highway Team Cherry had taken the night before to Longvilly, "move out along this road, make contact with the enemy, attack, and clear up the situation."

Ewell, a droll poker-faced man who reminded his troops of Ned Sparks, said only, "Yes, sir." A few minutes later his chaplain, Father Sampson, reported for duty and asked what the situation was. "Well, Father," drawled Ewell, "if I knew more, I'd be confused."

At dawn Ewell's men were on their way. Many were without helmets; some without rifles were pulled out of ranks; few had overcoats; but their step was quick and jaunty as they pressed their strange march to an unknown destination to fight an unknown foe.

Retreating armored cars, artillery, and half-tracks which had passed safely through Mageret before Bayerlein had cut the road from Longvilly, began slowly passing the double file of paratroopers. Then, eyes red, faces gaunt and filthy, some infantrymen from the 28th Division slumped by.

"What the hell are you guys doing?" one asked.

A paratrooper, his only weapon a stick, waved it menacingly toward the east. "We're going to fight Germans," he said.

"We've had it," the infantryman said, "and you'll get it."

Colonel Ewell plodded along in the middle of his column. By chance in November he had spent two days' leave in Bastogne, wandering over the naked hills among the occasional pine plantations outside town. Now this knowledge of the country paid off, for in the dense fog the head of the column turned down the wrong road. Ewell hurried up front, steering his men back on the right road.

Suddenly the quick chatter of a German machine gun broke out. Ewell and Bayerlein had collided in the fog.

Ewell called together his commanders and ordered one company to deploy to the right. To the left, he remembered, was Bizory, located near a rolling hill that could be easily defended; he sent word for the 2nd Battalion, which was following, to seize this village.

"Clear up the situation," he concluded drily, in imitation of McAuliffe. "But gentlemen, I don't want you to beat the enemy to death." Ewell's decision to stand and fight was to determine the defense of Bastogne. It was based on the assumption that he had run into a minor German roadblock.

(From *ibid.*, pp. 138-139.)

After desperate fighting, Colonel Ewell had bought a day's respite for the 101st Airborne Division, time to consolidate and critical to their holding the village.

Three days later, cohesion was building quickly between the 101st and the other units surrounded in Bastogne.

The men in the foxholes and in lonely company command posts on the edges of the defense circle felt a growing confidence too, but for a different reason. When word spread that they were surrounded, rivalry among the various units was suddenly forgotten. The paratroopers now grudgingly admitted that the 10th Armored Division teams had put up one hell of a fight and had saved the bacon during the first two days.

The sharp rivalry among the regiments of the 101st also ceased. Of course no self-respecting 501st man would want to be in the Five-O-Deuce, the 504th, or the 327th Glider. But those were pretty good outfits to have at your side.

Negro artillerymen of the Long Tom outfit which had wandered into town were stuffing the bottoms of their trousers into their boots. "What the devil kind of uniform! that?" a 101st officer asked curiously. "Man," was the answer, "we're airborne!" So was their spirit.

(From *ibid.*, p. 209.)

Bastogne held, of course, owing in large part to the leadership of the chain of command and the cohesion and fighting qualities of its soldiers. Few combat commanders' sayings have been so immortalized as General McAuliffe's "Nuts" as a formal response to a German surrender demand; the inspirational value of its calculated insouciance to the embattled troopers is incalculable.

Not all units had the sort of cohesion described above in the fighting at Bastogne. When units were not cohesive, good leadership, often more in the tradition of Frederick the Great than that of the American army, sometimes made the difference. Such was the case with Lieutenant James Creighton; the narrative begins on 27 December.

In the woods just south of the village, infantrymen of the 26th Division were preparing to assault Nothum. Then they would take Cafe Schumann and drive toward Wiltz.

Lieutenant James Creighton, executive officer of F Company, of the 101st Regiment, felt uneasy about the attack. It was a dark dawn. He knew that the good weather which had started on December 23 had ended. It would also be the end of air support. The next days would be bad ones for doughboys. Machines of all kinds would be of little use in the snowdrifts of these hills. The battle would be won or lost by infantry, Queen of Battle.

And the men of his company were infantrymen only by title. Of the original Fox Company which had started on the dash across France, there weren't a dozen left. Most of the company had been captured in Lorraine. Outside of Lieutenant Larkin (the company commander), Creighton, and eleven noncoms, no one had any combat experience. Eighty of the men were raw replacements, drafted from rear-echelon outfits--ordnance, heavy bridge, field artillery and anti-aircraft. Few had fired an M-1 since basic training; they were in poor physical condition and their morale was even worse. They all felt they had been sent up front as punishment.

They had. When Patton, bleeding for infantry replacements, ordered that the best 10 per cent of each rear-echelon outfit be sent up front, the "eight-balls," of course, had been selected. The American Army, in this respect, was the same as the German.

Creighton scanned the reluctant riflemen, crouching, steeling themselves for the attack. They looked cold, unhappy, and scared, and they held their rifles distastefully. They knew nothing about skirmish lines

and their only arm-and-hand signals were for double-time and "I have to go to the john."

The night before, when they had tried to take Nothum in their first action, everything had gone wrong. The battalion plan had been skimpy. There had been no coordination. The men had stood out in the bright moonlight in their dark uniforms. A scout had stumbled over a trip wire of a booby-trapped Teller mine and been blown to pieces. Then German artillery had plastered their positions. The tanks supposed to support them had bogged down. Finally the whole battalion had been pulled back 1,000 yards into these woods.

* * * * *

Heavy German firing started on the left. "The 1st Battalion is catching hell," he told the only other surviving officer in the company, a former music teacher. "There's a big gap between us. I'm going to make a personal reconnaissance and see what's over there. You hold fast."

The music teacher nodded uncertainly as Creighton moved off.

Twenty minutes later Creighton was back. But the fence line was almost deserted. He counted only three heads. Creighton jumped into the first shallow foxhole.

"The other g-guys took off," said a scared replacement. It was a man Creighton had known only a week. He was a little sunken-chested New Yorker who had complained almost incessantly on the long march to the front. He was constantly asking to fall out. Creighton had had to carry his M-1 the last three days.

"You stay here until I get back," said Creighton. "You understand?" The soldier nodded. Creighton ran back to the bottom of the ravine. Men were crouching in terror behind bushes.

A sergeant, sweating and swearing, herded half a dozen toward Creighton. "Christ, sir," he panted, "they never saw a dead man before. And when they heard that shooting and shouting from the 1st Battalion they took off like rabbits." It was Love, the communications sergeant. He lowered his voice. "You can't blame the poor bastards."

"I'm not blaming them. Just get them back on the hill. And where the hell is my exec?" Love shrugged his shoulders. Creighton scoured the bushes and found a dozen more refugees. He pushed them ahead of him up the hill. As he neared the top, there was a burst of fire, several horrible screams, and silence.

Creighton crawled forward. He was sure the Krauts had overrun the three men on top of the hill and now sat in their foxholes. But he had to go on. If he retreated, Fox Company would go to pieces. He reached the crest and looked over. The hypochondriac from New York was kneeling in his foxhole clinging desperately to the butt of a Browning automatic. His face was white.

"What happened?" asked Creighton.

"I d-don't know! Some G-G-Germans came over the hill. I fired at them." Creighton peered over the edge of the foxhole. Ten feet away was a German almost cut in two by a burst from the BAR. Six feet behind him was another German, his body sprawled out crablike. Halfway down the hill a third knelt in the snow, the front of his white cape red. He moaned as he bobbed his head from side to side.

"You did all right." Creighton turned. The hypochondriac was vomiting.

Sergeant Love slithered into the foxhole. "What'll we do now?"

Creighton peered down the enemy side of the hill. "Call up some Shermans to knock out that Jerry tank down there."

"Then what?"

"Then we attack--as planned."

Love's mouth dropped open. "With these eight-balls?"

Creighton adjusted his glasses. "With these eight-balls."

While waiting for the supporting tanks, Creighton worked out a plan of attack for his reluctant warriors. The 3rd Platoon, the one originally on the hill crest, had been shot to pieces. It would stay in place as support while the 1st and 2nd Platoons attacked down the hill, and then up the next hill to a small walled cemetery.

The 1st and 2nd Platoons were half led, half pushed into the foxholes along the fence line. At 4:15 P.M. an artillery and mortar barrage opened up. Friendly shells flew over Fox Company, landing in the German positions. Then there was a rumble from behind. An American tank slowly, cumbrously, climbed the hill. As it reached the crest, panzerfausts blasted from the German side of the hill. The Sherman fired into the two houses, then, still buttoned up, suddenly swung to the left. To Creighton's horror, it began firing directly down the fence line with 75s and machine guns. Men of the 1st and 2nd Platoons, crouching ready for attack, were caught in its fire. Creighton

plunged across the snow to the Sherman. He hammered on its side with his carbine. But the firing continued. He jumped onto the tank's deck and kicked the barrel of a machine gun. The turret cautiously opened.

"You damn fools," he shouted, "those are my men!"

At that moment the preparation barrage stopped. It was time for the attack, but the men refused to move. The valley below Creighton was now crisscrossed by bands of tracers and exploding shells. It was like looking into the bowels of Hell. Since the men would never move into this death trap without an example, Creighton stood up and shouted the slogan of Fort Benning, the infantry school, "Follow me!"

He ran down the hill, certain he would never come back alive. Dirt and snow splattered all around him as he ran full speed to the bottom. Here he spotted a stone wall and slid behind it.

"Well, we made it," said someone next to him. It was Sergeant Love. Creighton felt elated. He turned, ready to lead his men on another charge to the next objective, "Cemetery Hill." No one was behind.

"For Christ sake, we're alone!" In his anger he forgot fear. The two turned and climbed back up the hill, ignoring the bullets ripping on all sides. Their men, crouching in foxholes, only stared at Creighton and Love.

"Now listen, you sons of bitches," said Love. "This time you follow the Lieutenant and keep up with him. If you don't I'm going to shoot you."

Creighton and Love hurried down the line, pulling the terrified riflemen out of their foxholes. Once more Creighton led the attack. This time the men followed, for Love was behind them with his carbine.

Once started the GIs ran, anxious to get out of the heavy fire--and away from Love. They followed Creighton across the valley and up toward the cemetery on top of the next hill. White figures popped up from nowhere, and retreated to the north. Fox Company followed, too scared to shout or shoot. In five minutes they had taken their objective. "Cemetery Hill" belonged to Fox.

(From Battle, pp. 296-301.)

By 31 December, the motley group of untrained soldiers, inspired by the example of their leaders and a degree of success in combat, had gained some cohesion:

Creighton's company, Fox, still held the line near the Cafe Schumann crossroad.

At 6:00 A.M. German mortar and artillery began to dig up his sector. Then as the first light of day came over the hills, Creighton saw ghostly figures flitting among the woods. The white-caped Germans drifted forward expertly, shouting only enough to terrorize the Americans; not enough to give away their positions. Suddenly a great white wave rose, screaming wildly, and rushed straight for Fox Company.

Creighton was sure his company--F for fouled up--would now pile out of its foxholes and tear for the rear. But M-1s and BARs spit flames. Not one Fox Company man broke and ran. A second wave of attackers ran down the hill. Once more Fox Company held. A third attack came, and was thrown back.

Now fire from the 101st Field Artillery Battalion dropped between Fox and the Germans. Mortar shells--81-mm.--fell so fast their explosions became a continuous din.

Creighton crawled up to the first foxhole. Two bearded grubby men, their stiff bodies raised, were peering out front at the piles of dead Germans only yards away. "Y'know," said one thoughtfully, "if we use armor-piercing ammo next time, we'll go right through those trees."

The other, nodding sagely, began to load his magazine with black-nosed cartridges.

Creighton went to the next foxhole. There they were discussing ways to improve their positions. In the next hole a man painfully wounded in the arm was telling his buddy, "I'm staying."

Creighton tried to convince the man the extreme cold was dangerous to the wound.

"The Krauts are liable to come down that hill any minute, Lieutenant," said the man. "Anyway, it's just a scratch. Whatya want me to do, apply for a Purple Heart?"

Creighton said nothing but moved on. Fox Company had abruptly come of age.

* * * * *

Up front, James Creighton's Fox Company was getting ready for another attack. Creighton wasn't there. He had found a sled in one of the buildings at Cafe Schumann and was using it to evacuate the badly wounded. Creighton was now on his way back to the front; this time the sled was loaded with ammunition, two BARs, and a bag of mail.

As he dragged the sled through the deepening dusk, huge soft flakes of snow began to fall. Nebelwerfer and artillery fire broke out. He hurried forward; another Jerry attack was coming.

When he reached his improvised command post, a dugout, he was told the communication section had just run a line into the company area. He was called to the phone and briefed: the situation was serious all over the regiment; in case of a general retreat the going would be rough and the rifle companies would have to hold to the last man; Division had only two Bailey bridges on hand in case of a retreat back across the Sauer River; the challenge for the night was READERS, the counter-sign DIGEST.

It was a gloomy picture for New Year's Eve.

Cries came from the top of the hill as white-robed Germans loomed up. Creighton quickly called for artillery and mortar. It was almost impossible to see the approaching enemy in the early darkness. The men of Fox Company held off until the last moment, then loosed a withering fire.

The attackers fell back.

Creighton crawled forward to the 2nd Platoon positions. A sergeant was clutching his arm, swearing. Creighton had always disliked this man--for his tiny black mustache, for his fancy scarfs and tailored uniforms, and especially for his brown-nosing at battalion headquarters.

"Well," said Creighton, "you got your Million Dollar Wound. Move back." He took the sergeant's carbine.

"Balls to you, Lieutenant." The sergeant snatched back the weapon.

Creighton shrugged his shoulders and went to the next hole.

The second attack began. Creighton's men were almost out of ammunition and the Germans kept boring in. The attack was stopped only by a pinpointed barrage from the 101st Field Artillery. But a few minutes later a third, much stronger, attack was launched.

The Germans came on relentlessly. Creighton emptied his carbine and looked for more ammunition. He saw two of his noncoms dash from their foxholes to grab weapons from dead or dying Germans and then slither back to their holes.

The company perimeter defense was broken in two places. A rifleman stood up, aiming his M-1 at two charging Germans. It jammed. A wounded comrade in the next foxhole flung him his carbine. The rifleman grabbed it and loosed a burst as the Germans leaped with fixed bayonets. Both white-robed attackers flopped at the edge of the foxhole, dead.

Creighton's phone rang. It was General Harlan Hartness, the assistant division commander. "How are things?" he asked.

"We're pretty busy, sir."

"Will they break through?"

"That's hard to say, General."

"Well, keep on the phone. If the Germans break through you, we've got to know right away. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir." Creighton hung onto the phone, though he was impatient to get up farther front and see what was going on. Another wave of Germans started down the hill. Creighton disconnected himself from Division and rang the battalion artillery liaison officer. "Give me artillery fire, fast." He called for it almost at the edge of the perimeter line.

"For God's sake," said the artillery officer. "I can't do that! It's inside the safety limit for artillery."

"Damn it all, bring it exactly where I call for it," said Creighton angrily. "It's our only chance. We're in foxholes and the Krauts aren't."

A minute later friendly shells were exploding only yards beyond Fox Company. The GIs were showered with snow and dirt. The Germans, caught in the open, were slaughtered by the tree-bursts. The survivors turned and ran back up the hill.

There was now deadly quiet. Creighton crawled forward. His men were still dazed by the terrific barrage. But there had been only one casualty--a single slight shrapnel wound in the buttocks.

Creighton's phone rang again.

"How did we do?" asked a worried voice. It was Battery B.

"You only got one of my men," said Creighton. "And he was sticking his ass up too high."

The man on the other end seemed to sigh.

"Fox Company thanks you," said Creighton and hung up.

A moment later he crawled to the most forward foxhole. Though it was dark, light reflected from the snow. Before him was a scene of utter carnage. Bodies were sprawled in grotesque positions, already

freezing like ice statues. Five men in white were stretched in a straight line, frozen in flight. The barrage had caught a German machine-gun team, still carrying weapons and equipment.

Dark figures were now creeping from the Fox Company lines, collecting armfuls of light weapons and ammunition. Two GIs were hanging a German body upside down from the crotch of a tree--a warning of what would happen to the next attackers. Creighton didn't stop them. The night before, men of that platoon had sneaked out to pull back a wounded comrade. When they touched the wounded man there had been a great explosion--he had been booby-trapped.

A wounded German was led into the company lines, his face yellow, his eyes wild, the entire top of his skull sheared off. Creighton saw it was useless to question him and finished checking his count. He now had forty men. He crawled over to the 2nd Platoon to see how the sergeant with the mustache was doing.

The sergeant was lying in his foxhole dead, his mouth open, his tiny mustache frozen. Creighton slowly crawled back to his own dugout.

An artilleryman was waiting in the dugout. He handed Creighton a big paper bag.

"What the hell's this?" Creighton opened the bag. It was filled with doughnuts.

The artilleryman grinned cockily. "Battery B wants to wish Fox Company a Happy New Year."

(From *ibid.*, pp. 317-322.)

On 2 January 1945, the 26th Division was ordered to take Hill 490.

At 5:00 A.M. the battalion commander's voice was only a drone to Lieutenant James Creighton of Fox Company. He shook his head and pinched himself to stay awake.

"The attack will kick off at 0600," said the commander. "The battalion objective is the high ground at Hill 490."

Both Creighton and the Easy Company commander had bitterly protested the attack. Their companies were down to platoon strength; the men were suffering from trench foot, exposure, and pure exhaustion. There was no protest from George Company. That outfit had gone to pieces several days before when its commander, a good soldier, had cracked, refusing to lead his men to what he insisted was suicide.

The battalion commander knew that his people were in no shape for attack, but the order had come from above that Hill 490 would be taken at once. "E, F, and the remnants of G will attack on a 200-yard front on the right of the main highway to Bastogne," he said. C Company of the 1st Battalion will attack from the buildings at Cafe Schumann and keep left of the road. Creighton, you'll guide on the road and assault Hill 490 with E and G on your right. Any questions?"

The two company commanders bundled up and pushed out into the bitter cold.

"I'm not holding back anything," said Creighton. "I want to put as many men up on the line as possible."

"Same here."

The two wished each other good luck, and started back for their own companies. Creighton called together his few remaining noncoms. They were so dazed from sleepless nights and the shock of incessant artillery that he had to repeat the orders three times. Then, to be sure, he made each man recite the orders.

At 5:30 A.M. Creighton lined up Fox Company along the right side of the highway at the Cafe Schumann crossroad. Across the highway he could see the dim shapes of men from the 1st Battalion. It was comforting to know he had a solid left flank. His men stood, half sleeping, their heads nodding, too exhausted to know they were slowly freezing to death.

At 5:45 A.M. there was a gargantuan roar. The entire 101st Field Artillery had broken into simultaneous action. It was awesome even as it winged overhead harmlessly.

At 6:00 A.M. the barrage stopped. From the shattered woods ahead came the screams and moans of wounded Germans. Creighton led the attack, amazed to find that almost every tree had been cut down to waist-high height. Nothing happened for 150 yards. Then came a blast of machine-gun and rifle fire. Two men near Creighton dropped to the snow.

On the left side of the road it was worse. C Company of the 1st Battalion had been caught in open ground.

Suddenly a German self-propelled gun, sticking its nose out of the far edge of the clearing at the base of Hill 490, laid down low devastating fire. Then a flak wagon came alongside the gun, raking Fox Company with its 20-mm. multiple guns.

Creighton rushed forward. He felt a strange numbness but didn't realize he'd been hit. He knew only that something had to be done about

the self-propelled gun. There was a roar from the flak wagon. Creighton found himself on his knees in a cloud of smoke; he staggered to his feet, then dropped. He felt himself being rolled over. Sergeant Love's serious face was staring at him.

Creighton sat up. Half his field jacket had been blown off; one pants leg had been sheared off, the hairs on his right leg shaved as if by an expert barber.

"Are you all right?" asked Love.

"Sure." Creighton blinked and shook his head to clear his thoughts. "I'm going up to the company. You go back for tanks. We've got to get that damn SP."

Love didn't want to leave but he knew it was useless to argue with a man like Creighton. At Cafe Schumann he found two tanks and pointed out the location of the flak wagon and self-propelled gun; then he ran back toward Hill 490. Fox Company was digging in but he could see one man deliberately walking from foxhole to foxhole. It was Creighton, blood running out of both ears.

"Get down!" cried Love.

But Creighton walked on, exhorting his men, until he stepped into a shell hole and disappeared from sight. Love found Creighton in a crawling position half out of the hole, but unconscious. The Sergeant draped the Lieutenant over his back and staggered back to Cafe Schumann.

For Creighton the battle was over. And Hill 490 was still German.

(From *ibid.*, pp. 329-331.)

WORLD WAR II: PACIFIC

The marines and the soldiers who fought in land battles of the Pacific campaigns experienced a war of an often different nature than those who fought in Europe, but the qualities demanded of a good leader were strikingly similar.

On the first major amphibious assault of the war by American forces, Guadalcanal, the green troops experienced the same nervousness common to all soldiers hearing their first shots fired in anger. The narrative opens as a patrol off the initial assault troops gets bogged down moving inland, thinking an ambush lies ahead and the regimental commander exerts his leadership.

Usually, it is a private's or corporal's business to lead the point, the very forefront of an advance. But when the colonel reached the Lunga, and found our troops holding back there and anxiously eying the forbidding dark woods across the bridge, he had led the way. Behind him went his staff--including the chaplain, Father Reardon, who was unarmed.

(From Richard Tregaskis, Guadalcanal Diary, p. 60.)

Later, after the marines have established themselves on the island, we find another commander assessing a changing situation, soliciting information, coming to a decision, and starting his plans into action.

We jumped into a jeep and hurried along the road to a tent camp. Col. Cates was a quick-moving, quick-speaking, very trim man of middle years. He knew that he had won honors in the First World War. He and Col. Thomas went into a quick huddle on the battle then going on. Col. Cates unfolded a map and pointed to it with a pencil. The scene was very calm, considering that a battle for Guadalcanal was going on only a short distance away.

We could hear the rattle of rifle and machine-gun fire, and an occasional heavy explosion: mortar or artillery fire.

Col. Thomas said: "We aren't going to let those people (the Japs) lay up there all day."

"We've got to get them out today," said Col. Cates.

A grizzled man with a lined face and light-blue eyes came up. He was wearing breeches and high, laced boots, and his shirt was wet with sweat. Evidently he had been out in the bush. He was Col. L.B. Cresswell of College City, La.

Col. Thomas nodded. "You know this terrain, L.B.," he said without further ado, pointing to the map. "How's the chances for getting tanks in there?"

"Yes," said Cresswell. "There's dry land in through these woods."

"Good," said Col. Thomas. He turned to Col. Cates. "We'll give L.B. a platoon of tanks," he said.

We heard the booming of our artillery firing, heard the explosions of the shells landing at the front. An artillery liaison officer stood near by, talking into a phone. He had a direct connection with a spotting post, another with the batteries.

"How is it?" he asked.

He listened, then phoned the batteries. "It's right on," he said. "Give G Battery up 200." The shells were apparently falling amidst the enemy positions.

Cols. Cresswell, Cates and Thomas bent over the map. The plan was developing as they talked. It was to send Col. Cresswell with a strong force of troops around the flank of the Japanese positions.

Col. Thomas marked out the rough Jap position on the map. The enemy forces were evidently concentrated in a fairly small area running along a strip of Guadalcanal's northern shore. Their front was the Tenaru River, which runs roughly north and south in Guadalcanal. The shoreline runs east and west.

Col. Cresswell would take his troops--and tanks if he could get them through--and move around the southern flank of the enemy position. Then he would drive northward, pushing the enemy toward the sea.

Meanwhile, the American marines who held the line of the Tenaru River (they were under the command of Lieut. Col. Alvin Pollock) would prevent any further enemy advance. The enemy would be boxed in from two sides.

"I want you to get in there and pin these people down," said Col. Thomas to Col. Cresswell. "It's between you and Al (Col. Pollock).

"Once in there don't hold back. Drive in there like Brush (Capt. Brush, whose men wiped out the Jap patrol night before last) did."

Col. Cresswell began moving immediately. He shouted to an aide who stood near by, "Tell B Company to move right down there and wait for the rest." And he was gone.

(From *ibid.*, pp. 130-132.)

On 26 December 1943, the marines landed at Cape Gloucester at the north-west corner of New Britain Island in the Solomons. At this time in the war, the Japanese were resisting fiercely and almost never surrendering as either individuals or units; an indication can be seen in the casualty statistics for the island: the marines lost 493 killed and 1402 wounded, while the Japanese left 4600 dead and 329 prisoners. This, coupled with the hellish jungle terrain of the island, made casualty retrieval difficult and dangerous.

First Lieutenant Elisha Atkins was a platoon leader on New Britain. A football player at Harvard, where he had received his B.A. in 1942, he was described as "very quiet and polite as hell" by one of his sergeants. In the relaxed manner of that day's communications procedures, his codename was "Tommy Harvard." His platoon was crossing a stream the men had dubbed Suicide Creek when they were hit by the Japanese. The Japanese had carefully constructed their ambush to let half the platoon cross before they hit, so that the platoon would be split by the creek. They had a number of casualties, and the Japanese were sweeping the brush above the stream just higher than a man lying flat. The only relatively safe area was in the water itself, and the marines rolled and crawled into it and lay there listening to the moans of the wounded and feeling their blood flow over their faces. The narrative illustrates "Tommy Harvard's" leadership in this situation, and the bond of the platoon with him.

Their only chance was to creep downstream close against the bank and then make a dash, one by one, for the American shore. A little way down the twisting stream there was a spot where a man would have a chance to make it. Most places, he would have to stop to climb the bank. Only a man who wanted to commit suicide would try that.

It was slow work for the men in the creek, crawling downstream in the racing water, hampered by the thick tangles of vines and brush. Men caught in the vines struggled helplessly.

"Everybody had to cut everybody else loose as we went along," says Private First Class Luther J. Raschke, of Harvard, Illinois.

He found young Tommy Harvard tangled in the vines and cut him loose. "I tried to help him along, but he wouldn't come. He'd been hit three times. A slug had smashed his shoulder. He was losing blood pretty fast. But he wouldn't leave. He was trying to see that everybody got out first. He told me, 'Go on, go on!' He wouldn't let anybody stop for him. He said, 'Keep the line moving!' He made us leave him there."

They made their dash; got safely out and reached the line of fox-holes to which the battalion had fallen back again after that second day.

But Raschke couldn't forget the wounded officer they'd left in the creek. He said, "I guess everybody else is out."

"Yeah," said Corporal Alexander Caldwell, of Nashville, Tennessee.

"Well. . ."

"Yeah," said Corporal Caldwell.

So they got permission to go back into no man's land to hunt for their platoon leader. Corporal Caldwell took along two more volunteers, for they might have to carry Lieutenant Atkins, if they found him, and they might have to fight their way out. They were Louis J. Sievers, of Johnstown, Pennsylvania, and Joseph V. Brown, of Middletown, New York, both privates first class.

It was getting hard to see when they crawled down to the creek. Raschke stopped. They lay listening, but they could hear nothing except the rushing stream and, now and then, the sound of the Japanese talking. They had to make their choice then. They could go back without the lieutenant. Or they could risk calling. Nobody would blame them if they went back. Nobody would know they hadn't done everything they could do to find him.

Raschke lay on the edge of the stream and he remembers clearer than anything else how close the water was under his nose. The others were in the bush, rifles ready to fire if the enemy discovered him. Not that it would do any good. He'd be dead. For that matter, if the machine guns opened up, they'd all be dead.

"I was scared stiff," Raschke says. "I called as softly as I could, 'Tommy Harvard. . . Tommy Harvard. . .'"

"A voice said, 'I'm down here.'"

"It sounded weak, but we figured it might be a trap. So I said, 'What's your real name?'"

"The voice said, 'Elisha Atkins.' So we knew it was him. We crawled down and pulled him out. He said, 'God! Am I glad to see you!'"

He was shaking from hours in the chill water, weak from loss of blood, but still calmly Harvard as they carried him to the rear.

(From Marine Corps Combat Correspondents, Semper Fidelis: The United States Marines in the Pacific--1942-1945, pp. 43-45.)

* * * * *

A civilian correspondent observing the Marine Corps in the Pacific has insights on marine leadership and the marine mystique:

I thought Attu could be told in the story of the sergeant. On top of one of those snowy, marrow-chilling peaks in May, 1943, the

platoon leader, a second lieutenant, ordered the sergeant to take a squad and go over there and knock out that Jap machine-gun nest. The sergeant just stared. His mouth was open. He was horrified. He had been in the Army two years; now, all of a sudden, he was told to go out and risk his life. He, like most Americans, had never thought of the war in terms of getting killed. In disgust, the second lieutenant said, "All right, sergeant, you just sit here. If any of you bastards," turning to the rest of his men, "have got the guts, follow me. We've got to get that machine gun. A lot of our men are getting killed by that machine gun."

Well, about ten men followed the second lieutenant. They killed the Japs and the machine gun didn't kill any more Americans.

That afternoon the sergeant went to the second lieutenant and said, "Sir, I am ashamed of myself. Give me another chance." By then there was another machine gun to be knocked out. So, the second lieutenant ordered the sergeant to take a squad and knock it out. The sergeant did just that. In fact, he knocked it out personally. The necessity of risking his life had finally been demonstrated to him.

Why didn't the sergeant on Attu do as he was told? Why did he volunteer to do the same thing the second time? I think men fight for two reasons: (1) ideals, (2) esprit de corps. The sergeant's education had not included any firm impression of the things that are worth fighting for, so he didn't see why he should risk his life the first time. But the second time he was willing to risk his life for his fellows, for the lieutenant and the ten men who had risked their lives, possibly for him, in the morning. The bonds of their common peril of the moment had gripped him as nothing in the past could.

(From Robert Sherrod, Tarawa: The Story of a Battle, pp. 34-35.)

The reflections of Evans F. Carlson, a Marine lieutenant colonel at Tarawa, are also worthwhile. Carlson was forty-eight years old at the time, having enlisted in the army at sixteen, been commissioned at twenty-one, served in the First World War as a captain, left the service after the war, later enlisting in the Marine Corps at the age of twenty-six. He was commissioned in the Marines the next year, and saw four tours in China over the next fifteen years.

His experience as an observer with the Communist Chinese Eighth Route Army convinced him that social distinctions between officers and enlisted men must be abolished, and that every officer must prove himself before he can command the complete respect of the men in his command. The officer who forgot that his rank was a symbol of great responsibility had no place in Carlson's scheme of things.

Carlson became enthusiastic about the Eighth Army and he became bitter against the Japs the Chinese were fighting. He did not hesitate

to say so; therefore, he had to resign from the Marine Corps in 1938. He became a lecturer and an author (Twin Stars of China and The Chinese Army). He cried out against selling scrap iron to the Japanese. But, after two more years of civilian life, he became convinced that it would be necessary for the United States to go to war. In 1940 he went into the Marines again, this time as a major in the reserves. He was given his finest command, the Second Marine Raider Battalion--Edson had the First--which became known throughout the world as "Carlson's Raiders" after the famed Makin Island raid of August, 1942. At that time the United States needed a spectacular gesture against the Japs. Carlson provided it by bringing his raiders in by submarine and blowing up all Jap installations on Makin. Only two of the one hundred fifty Japs on Makin escaped.

A gaunt, soft-voiced, Lincolnesque sort of man, Carlson ran his Raider Battalion according to the theories that he had been developing for twenty years, the theories that had, he thought, been proved and improved by the Chinese Communists. His officers and men lived and worked together on equal terms--there had to be obedience, of course. The mess cook was made to feel that his job was just as important as the machine gunner's. The battalion adopted as its slogan, "Gung Ho" (Work Together). Every man of the 600, chosen out of 7,000, was taught that his life depended on every other man.

* * * * *

"Our greatest weakness is the caliber of our officers, and that, of course, is a reflection on our system of education. On Guadalcanal, with General Vandegrift's approval, I commissioned sixteen officers in the field. Ex-enlisted men often make the best officers after they have proved themselves in battle. On the other hand, I had to relieve two of my company commanders--it's sometimes hard to tell whether a likely-looking officer will pan out in battle. Then I promoted one of my company commanders to major. This boy--his name was Washburn and he was from Connecticut--crossed over the river, took his company up the shore, then crossed back and came in behind the Japs. They killed seventy of them by surprise. When the Japs collected themselves, Washburn had to withdraw. The Japs thought he had gone. Then Washburn hit them again from five hundred or six hundred yards. He used his head. I promoted him on the spot and it was good for morale, because every man in the company knew that Washburn deserved it."

(From *ibid.*, pp. 35-37.)

* * * * *

Tarawa, a tiny atoll in the Gilberts, was the first island taken in the drive on the Central Pacific. In terms of casualties as a proportion of troops engaged, it was one of the costliest battles in American history. Incidents that occurred there provide lessons to the student of leadership in combat.

The young major whose men were held up by a single machine gun was back again. "Colonel, there are a thousand goddamn Marines out there on that beach, and not one will follow me across to the air strip," he cries, desperately. Colonel Jordan, who by this time was back at his old job as observer, our battalion having been merged with Major Wood Kyle's reinforcing first battalion, speaks up, "I had the same trouble. Most of them are brave men, but some are yellow." I recall something a very wise general once told me, "In any battle you'll find the fighting men up front. Then you'll find others who will linger behind, or find some excuse to come back. It has always been that way, and it always will. The hell of it is that in any battle you lose a high percentage of your best men."

Says Colonel Shoup, "You've got to say, 'Who'll follow me?' And if only ten follow you, that's the best you can do, but it's better than nothing."

(From *ibid.*, pp. 96-97.)

* * * * *

Before I left Major Crowe I noticed a young lieutenant who came into the headquarters area. He walked around completely nonchalant, giving orders to the men with him, while the Jap snipers fired at him steadily. He did not even wear a helmet. I knew that no officer could afford to let his men know he was afraid, but I thought this was carrying it a little too far, this walking around, getting shot at bareheaded. I noted the lieutenant's name--Aubrey Edmonds--because I did not see how he could possibly survive the battle. Later I checked up and found that he had been wounded the second day--shot, not through the head, but in the back.

My friend Lieutenant Hawkins of the Scout and Sniper platoon appeared. "Get down, Hawk, or you'll get shot," somebody yelled at him. The Hawk, who had come back for more ammunition, snarled, "Aw, those bastards can't shoot. They can't hit anything." Then he and the men with him leapt over the seawall again. "Hawk's platoon has been out there all day," an officer told me. "They have knocked out a hell of a lot of machine guns."

* * * * *

There is very bad news about Lieutenant Hawkins. He may die from his three wounds. He didn't pay much attention to the shrapnel wound he got yesterday, but he has been shot twice this morning. He wouldn't be evacuated when he got a bullet through one shoulder. "I came here to kill Japs; I didn't come here to be evacuated," he said. But a while ago he got a bullet through the other shoulder, and lower down. He lost a lot of blood from both wounds.

Said the corporal who told me this, "I think the Scout and Sniper platoon has got more guts than anybody else on the island. We were at front and Morgan (Sergeant Francis P. Morgan of Salem, Oregon) was shot in the throat. He was bleeding like hell, and saying in a low voice, 'Help me, help me.' I had to turn my head."

Lieutenant Paine, who had been nicked in the rear as he stood talking to us--"I'll be damned. I stay out front four hours, then I come back to the command post and get shot"--has more news about Hawkins. "He is a madman," says Paine. "He cleaned out six machine-gun nests, with two to six Japs in each nest. I'll never forget the picture of him standing on that amphtrack, riding around with a million bullets a minute whistling by his ears, just shooting Japs. I never saw such a man in my life."

* * * * *

The single saddest tragedy on Betio is reported--not that one American's death is sadder than any other, but because we thought for a while this death might have been averted--Lieutenant Hawkins, the nonpareil Texan, died during the night. One of the high-ranking officers comments in a low voice, "It's not often that you can credit a first lieutenant with winning a battle, but Hawkins came as near to it as any man could. He was truly an inspiration."

(From *ibid.*, pp. 78, 96, 108.)

* * * * *

Finally, from one of the last assaults in the Pacific, that of Iwo Jima, we have a soldier who puts into words what so many other soldiers need most from their chain of command in combat: a steadying influence of a calm leader.

I think several factors contributed to my not having a bad D day. One was that when I saw Colonel Liversedge sitting there so coolly, I did not know he was noted for being unconcerned under fire, so I thought that things couldn't be very bad. I guess the sight of him helped a lot of other guys too. Another factor was ignorance. For instance, up on the hill that morning I heard a rapid little popping that sounded like a child's toy machine gun, or small firecrackers. When a sergeant major in the hole with me said it was a Jap light machine gun, I thought it couldn't be as close as it sounded. Later I saw the emplacement--it was only about thirty or forty yards away. It would have made a difference, all right, to have known that on D day.

(From *Combat Correspondents, Semper Fidelis*, p. 102.)

WORLD WAR II: CHINA-BURMA-INDIA

"Secondary" theaters often prove a good place to examine the characteristics of leadership, as the units serving there frequently lack elements which units in primary theaters take for granted. Such items as adequate logistics support, high morale, full complements of personnel and equipment, and good training and support facilities are seldom present in secondary theaters. Units assigned to such theaters have to "make do with what they have," and leadership is the decisive factor to make such units successful.

Such a theater in World War II was China-Burma-India (CBI). For both the Americans and the British, it was a backwater where war was waged on a shoestring. For that reason, it was a laboratory where leadership can be seen as a decisive factor in many instances.

In 1943, at the Quebec Conference, General Marshall agreed to form an American long-range penetration group along the lines of British forces already operating in Burma under the leadership of Orde Wingate--the Chindits. Code-named "Galahad," they arrived in Burma at the beginning of 1944; their organization and initial operations are outlined below.

Some American officers might have been equally doubtful. Galahad had been badly handled by the American command and staff over one question vital to the successful creation of a new unit. Such a group is made up of eager, or inquisitive, or suspicious individuals with no common bonds and disorientated as a whole. It urgently requires to be inspired and assured of the importance of its mission. Galahad needed insignia, a recognised leader, a sense of mission and consciousness of its own identity: in short, a soul. ('Soul' is not a word used by modern military sociologists, who prefer less emotional terms, but that is what a fighting unit needs, because it is dealing with the basic stuff of man's existence on a primitive level; the comradeship of the group, combat, survival, and death.) Galahad had started as 3,000 unscreened volunteers lumped together under the label 'Casual Detachment 1688' who, after a sea voyage of forty-two days, were dumped without equipment in a tented camp without any amenities in the middle of Asia. From then on their only common feeling as a group was that they were abandoned and neglected by their country and left to pull Stilwell's chestnuts from the fire by breaking a trail for the Chinese. Even their title was degrading and absurd. Yells of contempt and rage sounded through its ranks when the men heard that their battle title was to be the '5307 Composite Unit (Provisional)'. They were given no distinguishing badge, shoulder patch or flag. Wingate visited them, and even the Limey admiral, Mountbatten, the Supreme Allied Commander, but not Stilwell. The first essential for a new unit is an identifiable leader, who helps the unit to identify itself. By an odd arrangement, by no means compatible with normal United States Army practice, Stilwell sent two full colonels in succession to supervise training while the draft conducting officer, Colonel Hunter, looked after discipline.

Not until New Year's Day, 1944, was the position regularised, when Stilwell appointed one of his favourites, Frank D. Merrill, as Brigadier-General in Command, with Hunter as his deputy.

The 5307th to an outward or a British eye might well have looked unpromising, but in fact its 3,000 volunteers were a sample of American society, rich in talents and skills of every kind and ready to be turned to good military use by a leader who knew how. One of the most daring patrol leaders was a regular officer, the other a man waiting for the war to be over so that he could be ordained as a minister of religion. They were infinitely adaptable. The radio sections were self-taught and built up from scratch, and when some light artillery was parachuted into the jungle men were found to create a serviceable battery in twenty-four hours. The Americans are the most mechanically conscious of all peoples, but when, shortly before Galahad was called forward for operations, herds of mules and ponies arrived, 700 potential drivers, or 'mule skinner', were discovered in the ranks. The man who proved to be the deadliest marksman was a Sioux Indian. The mainstay of the intelligence and reconnaissance platoons was a group of American-born, or Nisei, Japanese. All that was required with such material was to give it a military shape, and then breathe some soul into it. No doubt Colonels Brink and Cranston, who sojourned briefly with Galahad as training Officers, made a contribution to its military skill, as did the genial Merrill for the short time he was in command, but the man who converted Galahad into a fighting unit was Charles N. Hunter.

Hunter had been serving as a weapons instructor in the United States Army Infantry School at Fort Benning when he volunteered for 'hazardous duty' of an unspecified nature. By virtue of being the senior officer on the USS Lurline, which brought 'Casual Detachment 1688' across the Pacific and the Indian Ocean to Bombay, he became unofficially the unit's first commandant, and he wasted no time in organising it in three battalions and appointing officers to command them. It was he who trained it, for no one was better qualified. It was not for nothing that he had been a weapons instructor, and Galahad's musketry was to prove formidable. He was to be the effective commander in the field from its first clash with the enemy until the bitter end in August 1944, when disease, wounds, and death had claimed all but a handful of the original Galahads. By his own confession he was the least inspiring of men, but soldiers respect and trust above all a leader who knows his own mind and understands their craft.

Colonel Hunter has painted, perhaps unconsciously, a candid portrait of himself in his memoir of Galahad. He represented a type common in the American, German and Japanese armies but at that time rare or non-existent in the British: the complete professional soldier, tough, capable, a little narrow-minded perhaps, authoritarian, and completely bound by the doctrine and the regulations laid down by the United States Army for the guidance of its officers. Characteristically, he began

his book with a lengthy quotation from the Field Service Regulations. Those were the days before the military self-confidence of the United States had been dented by Vietnam, and he believed, as a loyal American soldier should, that his country was the source of everything that was good, that the army of the United States was the best in the world, that the infantry was the queen of the battlefield, and therefore, a fortiori, that the United States infantry was the perfect example of a combat arm.

These qualities were softened by education (not many regular American officers could quote Montaigne), humanity and a dry sense of humour. A strict disciplinarian, he would never have tolerated the brutal and illegal punishments inflicted on erring British Chindits. He was indignant when officers or men were publicly scolded or 'blown up' in the old style. He flatly refused to follow Wingate's instructions to 'debray' his mules, by cutting their vocal chords, maintaining that the 'only pleasure a jack-ass ever had was in braying'. Unromantic, he could laugh at himself. Later at Myitkyina, when he was riding up and down on his pony ordering the ranks of a Chinese battalion before an attack, he suddenly asked himself (he recalled): 'Is this "Chuck" Hunter, of Oneida, N.Y. or General "Chinese" Gordon?' By nature Hunter was a perfectionist, but in training his men he did his best in the short time available, complaining between his teeth that not enough attention was being given in the schedules to discipline, or to the 'checking, marking and issue of equipment', as per regulations.

He was not an easy man. What was in the regulations was what had to be done. When he indicts Stilwell it is not for his admitted oddities of behaviour but because he departed from regulations: 'There was the army's way, and Stilwell's way,' he comments grimly. When at different times the general commanding the supporting artillery or the Inspector-General of Infantry demanded his presence at headquarters, he mentally thumbed the regulations and informed them that as he, Colonel Hunter, was in command and engaged in combat they must come forward and see him, if they so desired. In the end it was Hunter alone, unsupported by Merrill, who faced up to Stilwell and told him that he had mishandled Galahad. But West Point had left its stamp on Hunter, as it had on his commanding general, and 'Duty, Honour, Country' came first with him too. For him the supreme military virtue was to obey orders, and he commanded, deputised or cooperated as the situation demanded without grumbling or, in the British phrase, 'belly-aching'.

Stilwell, who disliked Hunter and treated him badly, retained him as second-in-command to advise Merrill, rather in the manner of a member of the old German general staff, whose business it was to guide the footsteps of a crown prince or grand duke in the days when the nominal high command was reserved for blood and birth. Merrill was a member of Stilwell's 'family', not by kinship but by the other great password to Stilwell's favour; membership of the group he led out on foot from

Burma. At that time he had been a major, acting as United States liaison officer with the British forces. Merrill was a cavalry officer who had been shunted off on the branch line of language studies, in his case Japanese, and while he had some merits as a soldier he sadly lacked knowledge and experience. He had no experience of active operations except as a spectator, and knew little or nothing of the work of infantry. All agree that he was kind, popular, courageous, unsparing of himself and calm in action. He seems to have had too much good sense to exert his authority over his far abler deputy, but unfortunately these qualities were negated by his lack of firmness in command and his subservience to his patron. But that was a weakness of all of Stilwell's staff. He also had a weak heart, which Stilwell knew well, for Merrill had collapsed and nearly died on the march out. He was quite unfitted to lead a ranger-type unit in tropical jungles or stand up to the strain of command. Nevertheless, he was to play his part bravely enough, and to Galahad the arrival of the genial Merrill seemed propitious, coinciding as it did with a flow of much-needed equipment and generous American rations instead of the inedible British variety.

On January 27th Galahad left its training camp and ten days later it arrived at Margharita, the railhead. From there Hunter decided to move by route march and not by truck, to give the battalions a final hardening and the 'mule skimmers' a chance to accustom themselves to their recently arrived charges.

For the moment, therefore, all was set fair. The men having completed their long march felt uplifted by a sense of achievement. Stilwell met the senior officers and gave them a short and soldierly address of welcome. There was a new spirit among the Chinese troops, he said, and now that Galahad was here the campaign could start rolling. His orders were verbal, brief and in the Stilwell style. Beginning formally, he broke off, and taking Merrill aside, gave him a broad instruction to attempt a wide encircling movement to the east and cut in behind the Japanese east flank to block their line of retreat. He included a vague instruction that Merrill was not to become too involved—meaning, presumably, that if the Chinese dragged their feet as usual he was not to take on Tanaka single-handed. But his precise intentions were never confirmed in written orders, to Hunter's disgust. He simply said: 'Oh hell, Frank, let's settle this together. You know what I want, so go and get it for me', or something to that effect. Frank did know and Galahad did get it for him.

The salient features of the country over which Stilwell had to advance were, first, the Hukawng Valley, into which drains a whole system of rivers, all tributaries of the mighty Tanai, which flows northwest in a series of loops until it meets the wall of the Paktai Bum in the north, where it changes its name to the Chindwin and turns south. These Chinese forward troops were as far south as Tapai Ga, where the rough track, which was all the valley boasted in the way of a through

road, crossed the Tanai. Some twenty miles further south the road crossed first the Naubyu River and four miles on the Numpyek, where there was a little village. That was Merrill's objective. If Galahad could make a secret flanking march through the jungles to the east of the valley, which meant crossing twelve sizeable rivers, including the Chindwin-Tanai, it offered an ideal blocking position to trap the Japanese while the Chinese infantry and American-led Chinese-manned tanks attacked down the road towards Maingkwan. That was to be the first phase, and Galahad's first battle-honour was to have the ungainly name of 'Walawbum', the name of the village.

The next phase was to capture the Jambu Bum, the watershed between the Hukawng and the Mogaung Valleys. Tanaka's forward depots were in Kamaing, on which Stilwell had his eye, and what he intended was to repeat his right-handed punch with the Chinese and his left hook with Galahad as opportunity arose. The eastern wall of the valley became higher and more difficult towards the south, but he noted that the Tanai gorge might offer a covered flanking approach usable by a specially trained force like Galahad. From then on Stilwell left his options open. If Kamaing fell, then the way to Myitkyina was open. If his operations bogged down in the monsoon rain, he would be contented with a lodgment in the Mogaung Valley.

The Japanese defences consisted of no more than four battalions spread out astride of the road leading south from Maingkwan, with a string of small isolated posts extended to the flanks. Tanaka had far too few forces to hold anything resembling a continuous line. He had to rely on patrols to cover the gaps, and on Japanese dash and aggressiveness to throw back the Chinese by counter-attacking the attackers. Against this weak force of some six equivalent infantry battalions supported by a few light guns, Stilwell could bring to bear eighteen Chinese battalions with artillery and tanks, and Galahad.

Putting Galahad in the right place was the crux, and it depended on locating Tanaka's most extreme right-hand or easterly position so as to sneak round it without detection. It so happened that there was already operating in this area a clandestine force of Kachin tribesmen led by American officers of the OSS (the Office of Strategic Services, the American equivalent of the British Special Operations Executive), whose mission it was to provide exact information about the Japanese dispositions, but through some inexplicable neglect this information was not passed to Merrill. For Stilwell to give Merrill his mission and the briefest of instructions was perfectly appropriate in the circumstances, but he also left him in the dark about the Japanese dispositions. However, Merrill made a good plan for his preliminary move. He saw from the map that there was a possible route swinging wide round the Japanese right flank, and he started along it with his main body and his own headquarters, while sending a reconnaissance platoon from each battalion to scout ahead, locate the Japanese and choose a forward

assembly area. The 1st Battalion's platoon was to follow the trail until it reached the east bank of the Tanai River. The 2nd and 3rd were to follow in the tracks of the 1st, but to wheel west at predetermined points and probe for the Japanese right flank.

The reconnaissance platoons were the elite of the Chindits and Galahad, and they needed to be. Without the frills, reconnaissance boils down to approaching a concealed and alert enemy in the hope at best of seeing him first or at worst of enticing him to betray his position by presenting a target; the first information of his presence being shots fired at the leading scouts, or 'point'. It is a nerve-racking business in any condition. In the silence of the jungle, where a foot carelessly placed on a dry teak-leaf can sound like a pistol shot, where the field of view may be no more than five yards, and where a burst of fire can be expected as the patrol rounds every bend in the trail, it is an excruciating test of the nerve of the bravest men. When contact is made the patrol commander is faced with a difficult decision as he goes to ground. Should he now disengage and report, when perhaps all he has bumped is another patrol as overstrung as his own? Or should he attempt to discover the enemy's strength by drawing his fire, and so risk losing men and becoming pinned down?

The commander of the leading reconnaissance platoon was Lieutenant Sam Wilson, a former junior instructor at Benning, who had thrown up his job and also the prospect of joining OSS in favour of accompanying his chief, Hunter, in the 'hazardous mission' that turned out to be Galahad. After many hours' marching Wilson heard bursts of firing behind him, first one and then another; doubtless both the other platoons had bumped the enemy, unless--disagreeable thought!--Japanese patrols had cut in behind on the trail to ambush them. Wilson pushed on and by the evening of his second day's march, on February 25th, had covered thirty miles and was about where he had hoped to be. Away to the northwest he could hear occasional artillery fire marking the line of contact between Tanaka and the Chinese, and he found a jungle hamlet with signs of digging and Japanese occupation, but empty. This, he judged, was a suitable assembly area for Galahad and well behind the Japanese.

Now to send back the news! The long-range Signal Corps type 284 radio was off-saddled from its mule, the aerial erected and the generator cranked, but the evening is always the worst time for static, and as the darkness fell the devilish Burmese variety blotted out every transmission. A despatch rider would have to be sent back, and Wilson on reflection decided that the information was too important to be trusted to anyone but himself. It so happened that Wilson was something of a horseman and also something of a horse-coper. When the herd of untrained mules and ponies was thrust on Galahad in India he had noted in it a black pony with a touch of blood and breeding and had annexed it for his own. Putting his platoon into defensive positions and handing over command to his sergeant, he ordered a mounted private to accompany him and set off back along the trail like Paul Revere himself.

The jungle was fairly open and fortunately there was a good moon, and all went well until Wilson, going at a canter, reached a broad sandy stream bed with an open glade on the far side. The jungle can be an alarming place even to the uninitiated, and though the great felines are amongst the least of its admitted dangers, Wilson cannot be blamed for his terror at what he saw, and heard: two leopards or tigers fighting or, more probably, mating. His pony shared his fear, rearing violently, the girth slipped and Wilson found himself and his saddle underneath the plunging beast with one foot caught in a stirrup. He struggled free and did the sensible thing, yelling at the top of his voice (the risk of attracting Japanese attention quite forgotten) and firing a shot in the air. The disgusted cats decamped in search of some quieter glade uninfested by humans, and Wilson remounted to resume his headlong ride. He found Merrill and his headquarters some eight miles up the trail, and gave his estimate of the situation. Grissom and Weston, of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions had, as he had guessed, hit the Japanese. Weston had been nearly taken in by a favourite Japanese ruse--that of pretending to be Chinese--but he had shot his way out of the trap. (Logan Weston was the catechumen who had postponed taking holy orders so as to fight the Japanese, to be labelled, regrettably, by journalists as the 'fightin' preacher'). After a short rest, Wilson rode back to his platoon, all in one day; a tribute to the fitness of horse and rider.

Merrill wasted no time in setting off with the main body. Five days later he had crossed two large rivers, received that essential preliminary for a Chindit-type operation, a supply drop, made contact with the enemy, brushed him aside, and prepared Galahad, now blooded, for its first battle.

South of Maingmaw the road turns sharply to the east, crosses the Nambyu at the village of Kumyen Ga and, cutting off the triangle between the Nambyu and Nyumpyek Rivers, hits the west bank of the Nyumpyek and resumes its southerly course. This stretch was commanded by a low rise on the east bank, on which stood Walawbum village. The battlefield was not a true jungle area, but there was a great deal of vegetation, denser along the river banks, with open patches of rice paddy and 'lalang' grass higher than a man.

Merrill, obeying a modification to his original plan by Stilwell's headquarters, spread his force rather wide. He was told to block the road east of the river at Kumnyen Ga with one battalion, three miles from his main position, which was on the rise overlooking Walawbum. McGee's 2nd Battalion was sent to the forward position, the 3rd, Beach's, to cover Walawbum from the east bank. The 1st, Osborne's, remained as force reserve, to guard the drop zone and light aircraft strip and post a screen of pickets to the north in case any of the Japanese came down on his right flank. The Chinese 113th Regiment of 38th Division were to move on the eastern flank and link up with Galahad, while the Chinese tanks moving inside them also closed up on Galahad's blocking position

from the north, and the 22nd Division advanced down the road towards McGee on a broad front. It all looked pretty in coloured chinagraph pencil on map, as plans always do until the enemy takes a hand.

Tanaka, reassured by the snail-like advance of the Chinese and made aware by the preliminary skirmishing that Merrill was round his flank, guessed what Stilwell was up to. Being the man he was, he estimated that it would be safe to hold off the Chinese with the minimum of his force while he turned the rest round to savage Galahad. A confused battle followed, a 'soldier's battle' if there ever was one, in which Galahad hung on unsupported and savaged Tanaka. Like all the fighting in jungle, it was a mosaic of isolated platoon and company battles fought at close range and amid great confusion, without any clear idea on either side where anyone was. Beach, reconnoitering his position, ran face to face with a Japanese, who was shot dead by his orderly. Colonel Brown chose a line of advance for his tanks which coincided with the line of withdrawal of a Japanese unit, and led to some interesting situations and a night of close-range skirmishing. The rendez-vous with Brown being so important, Hunter himself with a protective patrol went out to find him, and ran into the Japanese.

The main weight of the attack fell first on the isolated McGee, who took a heavy toll of his assailants, but then, running out of ammunition and unable to be resupplied, he abandoned his block and fell back to the main position. He had held on for thirty-six hours.

A remarkable little action was also fought by Weston, whom Beach had placed on the far side of the Numpyek stream and who was pinned against its bank by a Japanese company. He formed a close perimeter, while one of his Nisei Japanese, Henry Gosho, listened for shouted orders and translated them so that Weston could run from side to side countering each move with fire. Under cover of the battalion's 81 mm mortars, worked by a much-admired expert and Pacific veteran, Lieutenant Woomer, known to the troops as 'Woomer the Boomer', Weston crossed to the safe bank. In the lay-back party he sent ahead there to cover him was a Sioux chieftain and marksman, Norman Janis. When he saw the snout of the first Japanese machine-gun poking out of the bushes on the far bank, he killed the crew, and six more men later, while the rest of the party accounted for two more machine-guns and their crews. Weston was able to withdraw intact with all his wounded.

It was Beach's battalion that finally halted the Japanese advance. The simple tactical fact was that Galahad could shoot fast and straight, and the terrifying Japanese assault, delivered with suicidal bravery and accompanied by blood-curdling screams of banzai, made no impression on the Americans. The devotion of the officer commanding Beach's mule train, who kept him supplied with ammunition from the drop zone, ensured the defeat of the attack. The 56th Regiment left 400 bodies in front of Walawbum, seen and counted later.

Galahad was poorly served by Stilwell's staff, and the force was committed in unsuitable terrain against heavy odds. After another engagement similar to that described above, the unit was marched and countermarched. The narrative resumes:

Morale is a fragile commodity and nothing is more important in its creation than a successful first battle. McGee's men had now fought in two actions, each initially successful, but in each they had been suddenly ordered to withdraw in the face of some unspecified threat whose magnitude grew as rumours spread through the ranks. McGee himself, as his record was to show, was full of courage, but his sense of urgency sowed the seeds of panic. He marched back as far and as fast as he could, with no pause for rest, forcing the men, long without food, to eat their 'K' rations out of the packets on the move. Hunter noted with disapproval, as his steady stride took him past the battalion in its long single-file column, that there was no rear party guarding the tail. The noncommissioned officers were losing their grip, and as the faster men had begun to overtake the slower the squads and platoons were losing their coherence. One man was lying exhausted by the trail, pleading that he couldn't go on. Hunter, unsympathetically, said that in that case 'you're going to be awfully lonesome, soldier', got him on his feet, encouraged him until he had caught up the battalion, and gave him a cigarette.

It was McGee's misfortune that the trail was practically straight and his battalion presented a perfect enfilade target. The Japanese 75 mm gun was a high-velocity weapon whose shell had a nasty habit of arriving without a warning bang or whistle, and Marayuma's battery commander dropped one into action and started to rake the trail firing blind. Some lucky shots fell on the now disorganised column. Only a few men appear to have been wounded, but this was the last straw. The battalion bolted, and nothing McGee could do would stop it. A long, over-extended single file is, in any case, the worst formation over which to exercise any kind of leadership, and the best suited for the transmission of panic as the men behind start to shout and curse and urge those in front to press on. The weaker brethren threw away their weapons and packs, so as to march faster. Some fugitives pushed on until they ran into Galahad headquarters.

Hunter, whose rapid stride had taken him well past McGee's column, had rejoined Merrill in the tiny forest village of Nphum Ga and was shaved and washed when the leaders of the rout arrived, hysterical and crying that all was lost. Merrill and the staff immediately moved out to stop the battalion and restore some kind of order until McGee with the harder core of the battalion caught up with the fugitives. Merrill ordered McGee to go back to Auche, but that was now out of the question. At Nphum Ga the ridge above the Tanai spreads out into a cirque, whose rim provided good defensive positions, while the bowl below it, where the village stood, gave cover for the signal section, headquarters and

mules, and there was also a precious spring of clear water. McGee set up a tiny perimeter, 400 by 200 yards, and ordered everyone to dig in as fast as they could. The 'psychoneurotic' cases, as the Americans called them, were also told to dig, and then, if they couldn't fight, to go away and hide. Some of them recovered under this treatment, and rejoined their comrades. Maruyama caught up with McGee on March 27th and spent that day and the next feeling out his position. By the 29th he had stealthily moved all round it, and McGee was cut off. The siege of Nphum Ga had begun.

What honour the men of the 2nd Battalion had lost they speedily regained in their successful eleven-day defence of this obscure Kachin hamlet. The Japanese fought with their usual ferocity and less than their usual finesse. Maruyama did try at first to contain McGee and push on past him down hill to Hsamshingyang, where he could have paralysed Merrill's base and light aircraft strip, but did not persevere, either because he did not feel strong enough or because his troops lacked battle-craft. He decided to settle the issue by continual pressure and a series of headlong assault in traditional style on McGee's perimeter which, the more it contracted, the more it concentrated its fire-power.

* * * * *

The result was some close-quarter fighting of the bloodiest and most primitive kind. No quarter was asked or given. A few Galahads whose nerve had broken--something that happens in the best regiments--died under Japanese bayonets crouching numb with fear at the bottom on their fox-holes. The saintly Logan Weston, fighting his way into the position with the relief force, kicked aside a piece of sacking to find two young Japanese soldiers in the same plight underneath it, and shot them both out of hand. So close were the two lines that one Japanese, missing his way in the dark, eased himself into an American fox-hole under the impression it was his own, and was killed by the occupant. The only safe place for a man to relieve himself was in his fox-hole; one American who rashly left his in the dark for the purpose was shot dead by his comrades coming back. McGee had a crawl-trench dug so that he could go the rounds of his forward platoons in safety.

Such indeed was the proximity that the Nisei Japanese could hear the Japanese officers giving their orders for yet another attack. On one occasion this made an elaborate ruse possible. McGee drew back from the threatened sector, stiffened the new line with machine-guns, and booby-trapped the empty fox-holes that his platoons had pulled out of. The attackers, bewildered by the unexpected sight of the abandoned objective, hesitated for a moment and were cut down by fire from the new, undetected positions. So they tumbled into the empty fox-holes, with unpleasant results. Then they heard a Japanese voice, in fact that of Galahad Sergeant Roy Matsumoto, calling for another charge, and once more in their fanatical way jumped out and responded. Fifty-four bodies were counted after McGee restored his line. What he could

not do was to recapture his vital water-point, overrun by Maruyama at an early stage and grimly held as his only hope of success. By the end of the siege thirst was acute, there was no water to make water casts for the wounded, sulpha drugs were swallowed dry and those mules not killed by fire had died from lack of water. The 2nd Battalion was saved by the water containers dropped to them by the air force; indeed the whole defence was only made possible by the accurate dropping of supplies and ammunition into the tiny perimeter. The loads that missed the target helped to sustain the besiegers, so close were the opposing lines.

Finally, Hunter had enough, as had his men:

On April 4th Hunter ordered an all-out, concerted effort, which by the 7th had taken the 3rd Battalion to within 500 yards of their final objective. Never one for heroics, but apt to arrive in the forefront of the battle to point out in his critical way some badly sited weapon or the absence of a look-out, he was asked by Beach to address his officers before H-hour. Pausing to collect his thoughts he said: 'We've been attacking up this goddam hill for four days getting two-bitted to death and getting nowhere. Today let's take casualties we have to get the job done. In the end it will cost less. Good luck.'

On April 7th Osborne arrived, his men exhausted and riddled with dysentery and malaria. Hunter selected 250 fit enough to fight and sent one half round to the east to create a diversion, and the other to work round to the west, sit on the track south of the Japanese and cut their supply line. On the 8th they were in position and Beach had closed up. On the 9th, which was Easter Sunday, Beach arranged a recognition signal with McGee to avoid being shot by weary but alert men, and his leading troops stepped gingerly into view of his perimeter. Maruyama had had enough, and leaving his 400 dead rotting and stinking to heaven, he left his camp fires burning and stole away.

The reaction after such a fight, even if victorious, can be intense depression. Hunter, a profound believer in the adage that the devil not only finds work for idle hands but sombre thoughts for them to brood on, briskly set the survivors to work. The battle had cost McGee fifty-nine killed and 314 wounded, who, together with another sixty-five too ill to recover in the field, were flown out. The dead were buried and the swollen corpses of the 2nd Battalion's mules, mostly killed on their picket lines, burnt. A relief garrison was posted in Nphum Ga and patrols sent out. The men were rested, fed, and re-kitted. Then to make sure that they all realised that they were still a unit in the United States Army, Hunter ordered daily close-order parade drill: even the United States Marines would have approved. By way of recreation a mule race meeting was organised complete with bookmakers.

(From Shelford Bidwell, The Chindit War: The Campaign in Burma, pp. 82-101.)

* * * * *

The British had been operating in Burma since the beginning of the war, and had the substantial advantage of having cohesive units of indigenous troops who were well-trained and led by officers who were familiar with them. One of the most famous was John Masters, whose autobiography, The Road Past Mandalay: A Personal Narrative is a vivid and exciting account of the theater from the British viewpoint. As the previous author describes Masters:

Masters was at heart a maverick, seemingly the odd man out in the rigid, authoritarian society of the Gurkhas, but he had become a professional soldier by sheer application of a strong intelligence. Outsiders darkly regarded his sudden elevation as another example of the Gurkha fraternity looking after its own, but Lentaigne had chosen well. The commanders over whose heads he had been promoted gave him their respect as well as their loyalty--and not only was he respected; he was also liked.

'We were always made welcome at his headquarters,' said one officer, 'and came away feeling cheered up.' Another remembered attending a conference at Mokso Sakkan 'where Jack was sitting stripped to his shorts on a sort of bamboo throne his Gurkhas had made for him. We were rather solemn and depressed, until he began: "Well, chaps, lets get this next phase over and then we can go back to India for some proper peacetime soldiering."' His irreverence and occasional facetiousness were a tonic in bad times. Another Gurkha officer, by no means an uncritical admirer, recalls him as 'witty, flamboyant and amusing', adding: 'A very good leader, an excellent soldier, loved by the Gurkhas and. . .ruthless.'

(From Ibid., p. 230.)

Masters' observations on the weight and responsibilities of command are among his most movingly accurate descriptions:

Tommy arranged to relieve his forward troops with a reserve company after dark. Meanwhile two platoons, heavily supported, went out by the Water Point and attempted to clear the Deep sector, sweeping right-handed round the block, their right on our wire.

The attempt failed, the force losing several killed, including its leader, a really brave and excellent young officer. It was a bad moment for me, rather different from the permanent knowledge that war is a bloody business, because I had emphasised to Tommy that this was an important job and he had better send his best man. He had agreed. Those words are the aching refrain of command. They beat without cease in the mind and over the heart: send your best man. . .

(From John Masters, The Road Past Mandalay: A Personal Narrative. p. 240.)

The men of the King's Own passed by, very slowly, to be gathered by Heap into reserve. They staggered, many were wounded, others carried wounded men, their eyes wandered, their mouths drooped open. I wanted to cry, but dared not, could only mutter, 'Well done, well done,' as they passed.

* * * * *

I was near despair, but apparently maintained a front of unbroken optimism. (I find this hard to credit, but there are witnesses. Douglas Larpent and Desmond Whyte noticed it and wondered whether recent strain had unhinged me. The Cameronians' padre went in a kind of horrified awe to Tim Brennan and told him he'd heard me telling Johnny Boden to 'drop a few bombs over the wire,' with no more feeling than if I'd been asking him to lob a couple of tennis balls.) But I was not commanding a bunch of children, or starry-eyed hero worshippers. Our work had been so successful because every man knew what I was doing and why, which means that he understood tactics. All officers and men understood the situation as well as I, and the superb courage which had fought the enemy to a standstill while we had an attainable purpose now lost some of its fire. The only battle my brigade really wanted to fight at that moment was against 14 Brigade and I told battalion commanders to see that such bitter talk stopped at once. None of us could know the circumstances of the other brigades, and we must, in the old Rifle phrase, Look to our front.

(From *ibid.*, p. 252.)

One of Masters' subordinates, new to the unit, describes Masters' equanimity in the face of danger:

As we were soon to realise the situation was far from healthy but my chief impression of Jack was of his complete confidence. He seemed to be on top of the world, thoroughly enjoying himself and ready to cope with anything. . . .

(From *ibid.*, pp. 243-244.)

Masters' remarked, in regard to this observation, that 'command doth make actors of us all. Or as one might say, liars.'

The value of such coolness in the face of danger, and of a facade of calm from the commander is revealed in another passage:

The telephone buzzed. It was Henning. He began to say something but after a few words the connection was suddenly changed and a young frantic voice shouted, 'They're all round! I can see them! They're in everywhere, I can't hold----'

I interrupted him--'This is the brigade commander. Who's speaking?' It was that uncomfortable facility for sounding calm when I am not, for the young officer's voice changed as though by a miracle--actually, by a tremendous effort of self-control. He gave me his name and post, reported that the Japanese had broken through in such and such places, and asked for orders. I told him to prevent the enemy moving about, and to keep his head (keep his head, by God!). He said, 'Yes, sir. Thank you, sir.'

(From *ibid.*, p. 254.)

After almost three months of bitter fighting against hopeless odds, Masters begged for permission to break contact with the Japanese and withdraw the remnants of his unit. The order to withdraw did not arrive, and the situation became desperate. Resupply planes had been shot down, medical supplies and ammunition were critically low. His only options were to begin the withdrawal without orders, to surrender his command, or to see it destroyed to the last man to no avail.

A signal giving me discretion to leave the block was probably on its way. After what had happened to the C-47s yesterday any other order was lunacy, unless the floater brigades were at this very minute preparing to attack the enemy in the rear. And they weren't. But no signal had come yet. Bombs burst round me, bullets clacked by. I was therefore bound by the original orders to hold the position to the last man and the last round. The last bullet was not quite shot. After another hour of this, it would be. The last man. . . I had plenty of men left, far too many to see killed upholding my honour and military reputation. In any case they could only court-martial me, and I would be happy to have that chance to tell what we had done. Above all, my military knowledge told me that, unless Slim and Stilwell had gone mad, the discretionary order must be on its way.

I decided to withdraw from the block while we still had enough ammunition to use it in the difficult task of breaking contact. This is never easy to do in daylight, between forces as large as those engaged here. And we had, at a guess, about ninety men who could not walk unaided, and another thirty or forty who could not walk at all. The mechanics of the task I knew. I had learned them on the North West Frontier. The commander thins out the forces in actual contact and, with the men so obtained, sets up a series of covering positions, one behind the other and any suitable distance apart, depending on the ground. Finally the screen in contact breaks and runs for it, covered by fire from the first layback, as the successive positions are called. When they are well clear, Layback No. 1 withdraws, covered by Layback No. 2; and so on, leap-frogging continuously. It sounds easy but it can only be carried out by troops in full control of themselves. Once you turn your backs to the enemy strong psychological pressures urge you to keep moving, faster and faster.

I gave the orders: Henning to establish the first and strongest layback astride the water point; Harper the second and third; withdrawal along the Namkwin Chaung to the chaung and track junction at 227105, about four miles away; Scott and some of his battalion to go there direct and prepare the area for defence; next day, if possible, further withdrawal up the track to Pungkawng. I sent two last radio messages, one to Force telling them that I intended to withdraw from Blackpool immediately, and by what route, the other to 30 column at Mokso Sakan, ordering them to march at once to meet us, bringing all horses, mules, rations, and ammunition. A hundred other details I should have settled--

how the wounded were to go, who was to control them, covering fire between laybacks, action in case of meeting opposition from behind--but there was no time. I had to rely on the discipline and training of my brigade.

But one matter I must decide personally--the use of the animals remaining in the block. Having suffered surprisingly little at first, shells and bombs had killed many these last two days. Only three or four horses and perhaps ten mules were fit to move. It did not take me long to decide that two radio sets and a charging engine, together with the cipher chest, must have absolute priority. I think I ordered that the remaining mules should carry Vickers machine guns and ammunition, the horses severely wounded men. All animals were to be loaded to the limit of their strength. These decisions, and the hard circumstances, meant that men must carry picks and shovels, grenades, some two-inch mortars and ammunition, many wounded, and anything else necessary for our survival, in addition to their personal weapons and what rations they had left.

The orders given, men began to drift back past me almost at once--Scott and some of the King's; Henning and 90 Column moving fast to the water point. I went down with them; found our own barbed wire blocking the stream. Henning and I shot it away, strand by strand, with our carbines. Back up to my command post.

Battered, sleepwalking soldiers passed, here two fit men, here two more supporting a third with a shattered foot, then a man with a head wound, then half a dozen unwounded, each with rifle and pick or shovel. Some wore shirts and trousers, some wore one or the other, some neither. Many men had no packs, for theirs had been buried or destroyed by shell fire. Now came a group, with an officer, struggling under a three-inch mortar. These, I had specifically ordered, could be abandoned, for the barrel and baseplate constituted very heavy loads, and the bombs weighed ten pounds each, but this mortar platoon was determined to hold on to at least one of its weapons, and I did not try to interfere. It rained, it stopped raining. For ten days none of us had felt any awareness of rain, or knew whether we were wet or dry, except as it affected our job, made the rifle slippery in the hand, caused the Bren-gun barrel to hiss and steam.

Men trudged on in a thickening stream down the muddy, slippery path past my command post. Shells and mortar bombs continued to burst all round. From the eastern ridge the thinning lines of our forward troops increased their fire. A soldier of the King's Own limped by, looked up at me and said, 'We did our best, didn't we, sir?' I could not stop to think, to accuse myself of being unworthy of him and his like, I could only face the problems as they came, give answers, and try to keep awake. A Cameronian lay near the ridge top, near death from many wounds. 'Gi' me a Bren,' he whispered to his lieutenant. 'Leave me. I'll take a dozen wi' me.'

I went to the mule lines and saw Maggy quietly eating bamboo, a red gash in her belly and her entrails hanging out of it. She seemed to be in no pain and I hugged her neck, then Briggs shot her for me. Henning reported 90 Column in position astride the water point. I looked through my binoculars at the westward ridge, which the Japanese had occupied during the first battles. If they held it now we would have a bad time, as it dominated the Nankwin for at least a mile. Mortaring from it we would have to grit our teeth and bear as we trudged past. No, I could cover it with machine guns, for a time at least. I sent a man back with a message to Alec Harper, to be sure to put strong protection on that flank of his layback.

The men passed and passed, walking, limping, hopping, supporting others, carrying them. Tim Brennan reported that he thought he could break contact when I ordered. The Japanese were not pressing their advantage, and at the moment seemed to be under shell fire from their own artillery.

A doctor spoke to me--'Will you come with me, sir?' I followed him down the path. It was clear of moving men. The whole block was clear, except for a part of 26 Column. A little way down the path we came to forty or fifty ragged men, many slightly wounded, who had carried stretchers and improvised blanket litters from the Main Dressing Station as far as this. Here they had set down their burdens, and now waited, huddled in the streaming bamboo, above and below the path. I notice at once that none of them looked at me as I stopped among them with the doctor.

The stretchers lay in the path itself, and in each stretcher lay a soldier of 111 Brigade. The first man was quite naked and a shell had removed the entire contents of his stomach. Between his chest and pelvis there was a bloody hollow, behind it his spine. Another had no legs and no hips, his trunk ending just below the waist. A third had no left arm, shoulder, or breast, all torn away in one piece. A fourth had no face and whitish liquid was trickling out of his head into the mud. A fifth seemed to have been torn in pieces by a mad giant, and his lips bubbled gently.

Nineteen men lay there. A few conscious. At least, their eyes moved, but without light in them.

The doctor said, 'I've got another thirty on ahead, who can be saved, if we can carry them.' The rain clattered so loud on the bamboo that I could hardly hear what he said. 'These men have no chance. They're full of morphia. Most of them have bullet and splinter wounds beside what you can see. Not one chance at all, sir, I give you my word of honour. Look, this man's died already, and that one. None can last another two hours, at the outside.'

Very well. I have two thousand lives in my hand, besides these. One small mistake, one little moment of hesitation, and I will kill five times these nineteen.

I said aloud, 'Very well. I don't want them to see any Japanese.' I was trying to smile down into the flat white face below me, that had no belly, but there was no sign of recognition, or hearing, or feeling. Shells and bombs burst on the slope above and bullets clattered and whined overhead.

'Do you think I want to do it?' the doctor cried in helpless anger. 'We've been fighting to save that man for twenty-four hours, and then just now, in the M.D.S., he was hit in the same place.' His voice changed. 'We can't spare any more morphia.'

'Give it to those whose eyes are open,' I said. 'Get the stretcher bearers on at once. Five minutes.'

He nodded and I went back up to the ridge, for the last time. One by one, carbine shots exploded curcly behind me. I put my hands to my ears but nothing could shut out the sound.

I found Titch Hurst of the Cameronians on the ridge, and Douglas Larpent, the latter commanding the rear party. I said, 'Retire in five minutes. I shall be with the first layback at the water point.'

We looked across the shallow valley where the forward sections were engaging the Japanese with a sharp fire. The fire strengthened, under Douglas's orders. I walked down the path, looking, but the bodies had been well hidden in the bamboo and the path was quite empty. I muttered, 'I'm sorry,' and 'Forgive me,' and hurried on, and reached the water point. There, with Henning, I waited.

Soon 26 Column started coming down, some running, some walking. Up ahead I could see that the slow trail of the severely wounded had already passed the second layback. I waited, growing very tired, with Henning, until the last of 26 Column was upon us. Now was the most dangerous moment. We stared up the path, waiting for the Japanese to come on. But they did not come, and at about noon, fifty minutes after giving the first order, after seventeen days, having been defeated, I left the Blackpool Block in the rain.

(From *ibid.*, pp. 255-260.)

His bitterness at the destruction of his command by what he saw as General Stilwell's lack of compassion and knowledge of the situation where his soldiers were operating caused Masters to skirt the bounds of insubordination. Even so, his devotion to his men and his sense of mission stand out in his description.

On July 17, after a particularly bitter series of signals, my demands for a medical examination of my brigade were granted.

At nameless spots in the jungle, over the next three days, every man in the brigade was examined by medical boards consisting of two or three doctors. The strength of my four and a half battalions then totalled about 2,200 men. Those adjudged fit for any kind of action, in any theatre of operations, numbered 118, being 7 British officers, a score of British soldiers, and 90 Gurkhas. I ordered Desmond to amend the figure to 119, since he had not included me, and whatever my faults as a commander I knew one thing for sure--I was going to be the last man of my brigade out of Burma. They could say anything else, but they were never going to say I left them.

Without waiting for further instructions I ordered all the unfit to move out to the road in their battalion formations, and march towards Kamaing, where Force H.Q. staff would take over. This road, only about ten miles away to the north, had recently been cleared by the Chinese. With bitter sarcasm I asked for orders for the remaining 'fit' men.

I must say that Joe Stilwell had me beautifully there. He sent me orders. 111 Company, as I had called it in my message, was to go and guard a Chinese battery of medium artillery in position at the P in PAHOK, 492368.

I sent Doc Whyte out, though he claimed he was fit, marched my 117 men to the P in PAHOK, and introduced myself to the Chinese major and his puzzled but friendly American liaison officer. They said, really, they did not need guarding very much, since the Japanese were now in full retreat, and an entire new British division, the 36th, had arrived and was even then passing through. (They certainly were. I saw a battalion commander pass, followed by his batman carrying his umbrella and his shooting stick. They fought well, though.) I wasn't going to let the Chinese get away with that nonsense. When a major of Chinese artillery gets a brigade commander of the Regular Indian Army assigned to protect him, he's damned well going to be protected. I reconnoitred the position, dug trenches, organised alarm posts and counter-attack forces, and practised stand-to alarms involving all the gunners as well as my own men. They begged me to go away, but we dug deeper holes.

Ten days later someone got tired of this farce--I think the American liaison officer's despairing signals were at last read--and 111 Company was permitted to leave Burma. I handed over the defense plan to the now hysterical major, marched my men ten miles into Mogaung, had my teeth fixed by an excellent U.S. Army dentist, who seemed delighted to have a customer, and entrained for Myitkyina. The train was five flat trucks pulled by a tiny diesel. It was August 1, 1944, the day Stilwell was promoted to full general, two days before Myitkyina at last fell. Some time that night, having watched the last of my men board planes, I scrambled into a C-47 and, not knowing or caring where it was going, fell asleep.

(From *ibid.*, pp. 281-282.)

THE KOREAN WAR

The Korean War provides more examples of successful combat leadership than might be expected from its duration. It was well served by its historians in telling the story of the combat actions of the war. Additionally, however, the war demanded good leaders in a way that larger and more popular wars have not always done. For many of the same reasons as discussed in the secondary theater of CBI in World War II, an unpopular or small war tends to require good leadership for a unit to be successful. While in other venues, a successful leader may simply be lucky rather than a good leader, this is not as likely here.

One of the best stories of the young leader who is successful through his leadership skills--instead of the other factors that often influence success, such as luck, being the "right place at the right time," or simply leading a good, cohesive unit that a previous leader made that way--is Robert C. Kingston, a Lieutenant in the Korean War who commanded Task Force Kingston. Martin Blumenson begins his chapter on Kingston recalling their first meeting, several months after the exploits of Task Force Kingston.

He looked younger than his twenty-two years. Or perhaps he seemed younger because I expected a man who had a bullet hole in his shirt, a rip in the leg of his pants--torn by a shell fragment--and a bullet crease across the top of his helmet to look tough, hard-bitten, and old. He was boyish. He was too young, I thought, to be the commander I was looking for, too young to have accomplished one of the impressive achievements of the Korean War. How could this lieutenant have commanded captains?

The sergeant directed me to the officers' tent. There I found Lieutenant Robert C. Kingston. He was reading a book under a tree, looking for all the world like a kid home from college for summer vacation. He seemed shy when I introduced myself. He wasn't too happy when I asked to tell me about his task force. But he said he'd try.

We talked most of the day despite some interruptions. It was his twenty-second birthday, and, aside from the other company officers who sat with us from time to time, visitors came strolling in. Even the battalion commander came by to wish him many happy returns. [Captain] Lash showed up. Everyone had some excuse to explain his being there, such as pretending to be on an inspection trip. It was obvious they had come to pay their respects. The cooks had a cake for him at dinner. After it got dark the company officers had their party for Kingston. They were nice enough to invite me to join them and spend the night. We gathered in the tent where a brand-new bottle of whiskey had been saved for the occasion. Somebody played the accordion--someone had taken the trouble to go all the way to Seoul to borrow it so Kingston could have music on his birthday. It was a pleasant evening.

The sound of voices outside the tent awakened me the next morning. It was quite early, but no one else was in the tent. The officers were outside arguing.

"I'll go," Kingston was saying, "It's my turn to go."

"Why don't you be sensible?" someone asked. "You don't have to go."

"Use your head," someone else said. "You don't have to do everything."

"I'm going," Kingston said.

"What for?" someone shouted. "What the hell are you trying to prove?"

"Shut up," another voice said. "He doesn't have to prove anything. All he's got to do is stay here."

"Listen, Bob," a calm voice said. "It's foolish for you to go out on this patrol. You don't have to. You've only got a few more weeks to stay here. Take it easy. You're practically on your way home."

"I'm going," Kingston said. "Jack is new and he needs the experience. I'm taking him along."

"I'll take Jack," someone said.

"I can go myself," Jack said, "I'm not a baby."

"You're coming with me," Kingston said.

(From Martin Blumenson and James Stokesbury, Masters of the Art of Command, pp. 83-85.)

In November 1950, after the North Korean army had been defeated but before the Chinese intervened in the war, two forces were moving to be the first troops on the Yalu; the 17th Infantry Regiment and the 3d Battalion of the 32d Infantry, about fifteen miles apart. The 3d Battalion, to which Kingston was assigned, was operating alone, short one rifle company.

Reluctant to plunge ahead into the unknown, the battalion commander gave Kingston the mission of spearheading the advance. Kingston was to reconnoiter and, if possible, take Samsu. To help Kingston and the thirty-three men in his platoon, the battalion commander gave Kingston seven tracked vehicles (from the 15th Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion). Kingston's command thereby became a task force. The vehicles were half-tracks. Four of them mounted twin-forties--two rapid-fire 40 mm. guns. Three had quad-fifties--four caliber .50 machine guns tied together.

Designed to fire at planes, the guns were nevertheless effective against targets on the ground. They put out a tremendous volume of fire. They were practical also because the men of Kingston's infantry platoon could ride on the carriages that mounted the guns. The vehicles and their crews were commanded by a first lieutenant named Allen. Though Kingston was a second lieutenant and therefore junior to Allen, Kingston commanded the task force. This seemed odd, but the rationale was not: Allen's function was to support Kingston; the guns were in support of the infantry.

Of the three enemies in Korea--the weather, the terrain, and the North Koreans--the weather was probably the worst. If the sun was shining, the temperature in winter might get up to 20 degrees below zero; 30 and 40 below were more normal. The troops wore everything they could manage to get on--woollen long johns, two pairs of socks, cotton pants over woollen trousers, pile jacket over woollen shirt, parka with hood, trigger-finger mittens with woollen insert, scarves around their heads under their helmets to protect their ears. Anyone who was sitting or standing was usually stamping his feet to keep them from getting numb.

The cold affected equipment. Motors had to be started every hour and run at least fifteen minutes. Men had to shoot their weapons periodically to be sure they worked. They had to build fires in empty 55-gallon drums and put them against mortar base plates to keep the metal from crystallizing and snapping. Artillery shells did not always detonate completely when fired.

Living, simply keeping alive in the cold, was enough of a job without having to worry about the terrain and the enemy. Yet these too were dangerous. The ground was covered with snow, a dreary landscape almost bare of growth. Streams were frozen so thick the ice could support tanks. The single road to Samsu was narrow. It wound through mountains, across the face of cliffs, along the edge of a gorge. A skid could mean death.

Across the road the North Koreans had rolled boulders down from the hills. Kingston's vehicles were able to get past four of these rockslides--by maneuvering around them or pushing the rocks aside. A fifth obstacle near a destroyed bridge caused some trouble. The column had to back up several hundred yards to a place where each vehicle could plunge off the side of the road. Each in turn teetered uncertainly for a second or two before dropping off the embankment and skidding into a frozen field. The column crossed the field, then a frozen creek, and finally found a place where the vehicles could get back on the road. But first some timbers from the bridge had to be used to make a ramp. All this took time. Whenever the vehicles halted, men had to be sent out to the front and flanks as outposts. Kingston's task force spent all day moving the ten miles to Samsu.

Still, no enemy troops had been seen. Not until the task force was within sight of Samsu did the first hostile fire sound that day. Several shots rang out in the town. Kingston immediately halted the vehicles, told the infantrymen to dismount. They waited, listening for more evidence of the enemy's presence. Only silence. So they slipped into town, a village of about fifty houses, bombed-out, burned, bullet-riddled. The place was deserted, without a living thing, not even a dog. The shots? The bodies of four civilians lay in the schoolyard, probably murdered on Kingston's approach.

Waving in the vehicles and setting up an all-round defense of the town, Kingston radioed battalion that he was there. Soon after dark, trucks carrying the rest of Company K and battalion headquarters arrived in Samsu.

That night the operations officer, Captain Lash, called Kingston into the command post. "You'll continue your advance tomorrow," Lash told him.

"How far?"

"All the way."

Kingston's face showed his surprise. "The Yalu?"

Lash nodded. "Think you can make it?"

Kingston grinned. "Are you kidding Sure I'll make it."

It was no choice assignment, and it wasn't going to be easy. For the next three days Kingston's task force started from Samsu toward Yongsong-ni each morning and had to turn back each afternoon. The reasons were the same: terrain, weather, and North Korean troops. The road was narrow, with a cliff most of the way along the right side, a drop-off to the river on the left, high ground on both sides giving the enemy the opportunity to keep the task force under surveillance and fire. The weather stayed cold, and the men were miserable. Rock-slides, defended roadblocks, sudden fusillades of fire obstructed the task force. Snow flurries kept planes from flying in support. Ice on the road kept the vehicles to a crawl. Artillery shells from Samsu seemed to have no effect on the enemy.

Darkness came early on the third day, and the drivers had to use their blackout lights to get back to Samsu. The men were suddenly tired, disgusted with an operation that seemed to be getting nowhere. Kingston found himself swearing under his breath.

He reported in to battalion headquarters, where he saw the battalion commander. "No casualties, but we lost a quad-fifty. It tipped over into a ditch."

"You didn't leave anything in the quad-fifty, did you?"

It was a routine question, but Kingston flared. "What the hell do you think I am?" He recovered at once. "I'm sorry, sir. We stripped it--ammo, spare parts, gas, the works."

There was a silence between them before the colonel spoke. "You all right?"

"Yes, sir." He nodded to add emphasis. "Just mad."

"You want to try it again tomorrow?"

"You bet I do, Colonel."

"You need anything else?"

He had already gotten more troops added to his task force: a jeep mounting a machine gun; a tank belonging to the 7th Reconnaissance Troop; a squad, then a platoon, from the 13th Engineer Combat Battalion under a first lieutenant named Donovan; a forward observer, Lieutenant Trotter, from Battery C, 48th Field Artillery Battalion, whose job it was to direct the fire of howitzers emplaced at Samsu; a tactical air control officer, Captain Jiminez, whose job was to bring in planes to bomb and strafe.

But Kingston asked for and received another tank, more jeep-mounted machine guns, some mortars. This brought his command to more than a hundred men. With this strength he blasted through on the following day to Yongsong-ni, a collection of thirty houses, most of them burned. But it took a firefight, an air strike, and several casualties to get the troops through the town.

Kingston reported his arrival to battalion by radio. "I'm going on," he told Lash.

"Watch your step. We just got some intelligence information; there's about a battalion opposing you."

"You want me to stop?"

"No, but be careful. I've just sent you up some heavy mortars."

"Can you send me more troops?" He meant infantry.

"Not right now. Maybe later."

About a mile beyond Yongsong-ni the road ascends. The incline starts gradually, becomes increasingly steep. It rises finally to a mountain pass, a defile overshadowed by high ground on both sides.

At the bottom of the rise the task force ran into North Korean fire. Rifle and machine-gun bullets swept the road, wounding several men, among them Lieutenant Allen, the antiaircraft officer.

From the ditches where the infantry took cover, from the carriages where the crew members huddled behind their guns, the men of the task force put out a tremendous volume of fire. The tanks blasted the high ground at almost point-blank range. Yet the North Koreans refused to give way. It was difficult to see the enemy troops, the elusive figures behind boulders. Mortar shells began to drop in and around the Americans; some artillery came in. But it was impossible to locate their positions.

"Trotter!" Kingston shouted. "Get some shells up here."

Trotter was already on his radio, calling for artillery support.

"Jimenez!" Kingston roared.

"OK, OK," Jimenez yelled back. "I'm getting the planes now." His radio operator had been wounded, and he had taken over the squawk box.

The arrival of the heavy mortars was heralded by the appearance of Captain Harry Hammer, who commanded a platoon. He had loaded his men and weapons into trucks at Samsu, then drove on ahead in his jeep. At Yongsong-ni, hearing the sound of gunfire, he walked on to find Kingston taking shelter behind one of the twin-forty carriages. Hammer crouched beside him. "I have seventy men and four mortars on the way up," he told Kingston.

"Set them up," Kingston said, "and get some shells up here."

Hammer hurried back to Yongsong-ni to speed the movement.

The mortars didn't help. Neither did an air strike by four Corsairs, which gave such close-in support that one bomb showered dirt over a few of Kingston's men. A small stone cut his lip. Sending Sergeant Wayne O. Wood and a squad of men to outflank enemy positions on high ground turned out to be an impossible maneuver. Enemy machine guns cut them down.

Kingston yelled to his own machine gunners to keep working. He noticed Sergeant Templin firing his jeep machine gun even though he lacked cover, Sergeant Emerick working his 60 mm. mortars from the ditch. Despite the fact that every man in the task force was shooting, the opposition was too strong. "I'm breaking off," he told Lash over the radio. "I'm taking too many casualties." He was bitterly disappointed; he had not fulfilled his promise. But to keep at it didn't

make sense at the price he would have to pay. Though it was ticklish work to disengage, Kingston at last moved his men back to Yongsong-ni, where he organized defensive positions.

Not long afterward, more reinforcements arrived. Lash had sent up a rifle company and an artillery battery for attachment to the task force. The rifle company posed a problem. It was Company I, and the commander not only outranked Kingston but was an infantryman too. Though Hammer and Jiminez were also captains, their position under Kingston could be rationalized by the fact that they were in support of Kingston's infantry, but the infantry captain did not exactly fit that category.

"Kingston," the company commander informed him, "I'm taking command of the troops in Yongsong-ni."

This was usual practice.

"OK, Captain," Kingston said. "You're the senior commander in town. You're the commander of Yongsong-ni."

Cold, tired, angry, Kingston was spooning a supper of cold beans out of a can. His cut lip hurt.

"How about the task force?" Kingston asked. "You also in command of Task Force Kingston?"

"I suppose so. You have any objections?"

"What did battalion say?"

"They said to come up and reinforce you."

An incoming shell crashed into the wall of a building nearby, the sole wall of the building still standing before the shell demolished it.

"Hammer," Kingston shouted, "get your men on that."

A few more rounds came in from a single gun; then the fire ceased. No one was hurt. The only damage was to a tire on a truck, shredded by shell fragments.

Later that evening, as Kingston huddled around a bonfire with several of his men, the rifle company commander came by. "Want to talk to you," he told Kingston.

They walked off a few yards from the men. "Listen," the captain said, "As far as I'm concerned, this is your task force. You have the mission, I'm here to reinforce you, and I'll support you. You need anything, you let me know."

Surprise kept Kingston silent a moment. "You sure you want it that way?"

The captain was sure.

"Thanks," Kingston said. Then his voice became crisp. "I'll tell you what I think we ought to do. Much as I want to get there, I think we ought to rest the men tomorrow. Let them write some letters home, clean their weapons, get some sleep, three hot meals. I'll check it out with battalion. Is that OK with you?"

The captain nodded. Fine. Go ahead."

(From *ibid.*, pp. 88-93.)

The task force rested for a day and was joined by a liaison officer from the 17th Infantry and by the commander of the artillery supporting Kingston.

Kingston's impatience to complete his mission and cover the ten miles to the Yalu was obvious. And contagious. It spread to the men of the task force, now numbering around three hundred men, including [an] anonymous major, three captains, and several first lieutenants.

The day of rest had worked wonders. The men were in high spirits. "Let's go!" Kingston shouted, waving his arm in a wide forward motion and springing aboard a quad-fifty carriage. The vehicles rumbled forward, the crews firing an occasional few rounds to keep their weapons in working order, the infantrymen shooting from time to time to keep their rifles operating. No enemy fire came from the mountain pass. Part way through the defile, two dead North Korean soldiers lay in the road, one on a stretcher. Three engineer soldiers, after checking the bodies to be sure they were not booby-trapped, rolled them out of the way.

At the top of the pass, across eight miles of bleak countryside, lay the Yalu River gorge and the cliffs of Manchuria, clearly visible. Though he still could not see the river itself, Kingston had a feeling of elation.

(From *ibid.*, p. 94.)

After an accidental explosion that killed one man and wounded eight, the bridge was repaired, then more work for the engineers was encountered when the force came upon a roadblock on a mountainside. While the repairs were going on, Kingston set out cross-country with his infantry and their artillery observers.

They walked a few miles toward the cliffs of Manchuria, toward the Yalu gorge and the river they still could not see. Around a curve in the road they came upon the village of Singalpajin. The road ran through a large flat field bounded on three sides by a loop of the Yalu gorge. Along the left side of the road a row of undamaged houses marked the outskirts of town. Vanretti held up his hand to signal halt. He sent four men to the first house to make sure it was empty. Kingston waved King forward and directed his men to the right of the road to cover Vanretti and his group. The first two houses were unoccupied. Everyone was moving forward when a volley of rifle fire suddenly descended on Kingston's group. A bullet wounded Stein in the arm. Stein, Wild, Hughes, and the company commander dived into a drainage ditch alongside the road. Kingston remembered having passed small culvert; he sprinted back and jumped into it. The major followed.

When the fire subsided, Kingston raised his head from the culvert and yelled to King to deploy off the road into the field on the right. Even as he shouted, the four officers burst from the ditch and sprinted to the first house. Stein was holding his left arm. Bullets kicked up the snow around them, but they made it to the house and disappeared inside. What the hell! Kingston said to himself. Then he figured they needed the shelter to fix Stein's wound. He noticed the major's face. The officer was gritting his teeth in pain.

"What's the matter?" Kingston asked.

"Sprained or broke my ankle."

A soldier from Vanretti's group crawled down the ditch to the culvert to find out what Kingston wanted done. Kingston told him to help the major to the rear. Both men crawled off. Kingston inched forward to get in touch with Vanretti and the point.

He found Vanretti and his five men taking cover in the ditch. King's men meanwhile were coming forward on the other side of the road, moving one at a time in short rushes. The enemy seemed holed up in the fourth house of the town, a building larger than the rest. It was perhaps forty yards away.

"What'll we do?" Vanretti asked.

"I'll get King to cover us," Kingston said. "You take two men and work your way up on the left of the house. The rest of you men cover them from here. When you're in position, Vanretti, I'll run straight at them and try to get their attention. You move in on them. Thirty minutes ought to do it. But be sure to wait for me."

Vanretti nodded. He pointed to two men and started crawling out of the ditch, across the field. The two men followed. Kingston sent

a man across the road to tell King what to do, and rifle fire soon started to beat against the house. Kingston crawled down the ditch to get out of the line of fire of his own men.

When thirty minutes had passed, Kingston leaped out of the ditch and started running, heading straight for the house. He had a grenade in his right hand, his rifle in the other. He whooped and yelled as loud as he could. Out of the corner of his eye he could see Vanretti and the two men with him spring to their feet and run toward the house. The crust on the snow was hard. Though it supported Kingston at first, the crust cracked as he picked up speed, then broke. The faster Kingston tried to run the deeper his feet sank through the crust. He felt he was moving at a walk, his feet floundering in the snow. Vanretti too seemed to be walking, painfully slowly. Kingston's breath came in large gasping sobs. His eyes stung from tears brought on by the cold, and he closed them for a few seconds as he ran. He heard the whang of bullets close to him. Having covered half the distance, he felt he could go no further. He was breathing in great aching gasps. What what seemed to him his last ounce of strength, he flung the grenade toward the house. He was watching it arch through the air when something hit him hard on top of the head, spun him around, knocking him down.

When Kingston opened his eyes, Vanretti was bending over him.

"You're all right," Vanretti was saying in a gentle, imploring voice. "You're all right. You're going to be all right. You got to be all right."

He noticed that Vanretti was holding a helmet with a bullet crease across the top.

"You're all right, Lieutenant," Vanretti urged. "You're going to be fine."

Kingston sat up, blinking his eyes, still not altogether coordinated.

"We got them," Vanretti said. "That grenade came in perfect."

"Anybody hurt?"

"Not a one; nobody."

"How many were there? In the house."

"Five. We got them. We thought they got you."

(From *ibid.*, pp. 95-97.)

The task force reached the Yalu at the same time the Chinese intervened; in the wild retreat that followed, the exploits passed into oblivion as a footnote to the war. Years later, Blumenson encountered Lash in the Pentagon and they discussed the task force.

"Tell me 'bout the command setup on Kingston," I said. "Part of it never quite made sense."

He smiled. "It was odd. It was a peculiar command setup."

"Hammer told me no one ever questioned the fact that Kingston was the boss. But really, when you sent Company I up to Yongsong-ni, didn't you mean for the company commander to take over?"

Lash laughed. "That's a low blow. Officially, according to the records, we put the company commander in command of the task force. But since the task force had already been in existence about a week and was being mentioned in the situation reports, the periodic reports, and the journals, we didn't change the name of it."

"Well, who was in command the last day when the troops reached the Yalu?"

"Officially? Or actually?"

"I guess you've answered it. All right, tell me why you sent Company I up to Kingston? Why not Company K? K was available, wasn't it?"

Lash laughed again. "You've hit one of my darkest secrets. But I'll tell you. I figured that if Kingston's company came up to reinforce him, he would revert to being simply a platoon leader in that company. But since Kingston's platoon was not an organic part of Company I, Kingston had a good chance to remain in control."

"You figured it would work like that?"

Lash was modest too. "Well, maybe not so clearly as that."

"But it worked."

"Yes, it worked out fine. Any command situation works out fine when you have good men."

"You don't mean just Kingston."

"I mean the commander of Company I too. He was a good officer, and he deserves a lot of credit."

"Hammer, Allen, Donovan, and the rest of them also, I suppose."

"Right," Lash said. He paused for a moment before adding thoughtfully, "But mostly Kingston. The others crystallized around him."

I didn't know whether "crystallized" was exactly the right word, but I certainly understood what he meant.

(From *ibid.*, pp. 98-99.)

* * * * *

At the same time as Task Force Kingston was on the Yalu, another infantryman was performing acts which would cause him to be posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. Later, his replacement would have to build his own reputation with the unit.

Easy Company of the 27th (Wolfhound) Infantry Regiment waited curiously for the time when battle would reveal to them the abilities of their new commanding officer. Captain Lewis L. Millett had come into his assignment with his eyes wide open--he knew it was going to take a lot of doing to convince the men that anyone could replace their old C.O.

Even the greenest replacements in the company knew of Dusty Desiderio's fight on the Chongchon during the terror-filled night of November 27, 1950, when only Easy Company stood between screaming Chinese Communist assault troops and the headquarters of a U.S. task force that was operating considerably in front of the main battle line in North Korea. The company had been encircled, and had endured a night of bone-jarring artillery and searing machine gun and rifle fire. Its tanks had panicked and the drivers wanted to run--but Desiderio had pounded on the armored hulls with his rifle butt and bare fists and bullied them back into firing positions.

He was seriously wounded by the fragments of an exploding shell, but gave no thought to himself as he hobbled from man to man, leading the fight against the intruders with every ounce of his fast-ebbing energy. The Chinese hurled maddened attacks against the Company, and when it seemed that they must succeed by sheer weight of numbers and superior firepower, the men heard Desiderio crying above the sounds of battle, "Hold until daylight and we've got it made; hold until dawn!"

The tempo of the fight increased; the Reds surged into the positions of the spent and weary company. Desiderio was in the forefront of the fight, firing his rifle until he ran out of ammunition; then he fired an abandoned carbine until its ammunition, too, was gone, at which point he hurled it at the enemy, and drew his pistol.

The peaceful routine of garrison life was shattered by the warfare in Korea and soon the 25th Division was ordered into the fight.

Rugged and unhappy days were ahead for the U.S. forces, who were initially overwhelmed by superior enemy manpower and firepower. The artillery gun positions were the enemy's favorite targets for after dark infiltration. Nerves grew ragged as artillery redlegs manned their guns all day, then had to fight to keep them at night. Millett organized a 50-man volunteer security platoon of artillerymen to patrol the perimeters at night.

Brigadier General George B. Barth, artillery commander of the division, later remarked, "I am convinced Millett does not know what it means to be afraid. I know of no other man in whose behalf I can make such an unequivocal statement."

(From Bruce Jacobs, Heroes of the Army, pp. 168-173.)

Milletts had been an artillery forward observer attached to Desiderio's company. He was wounded by mortar fire in the fierce fighting that led to Desiderio's death. After recuperating from his wound, he began to try to get command of an infantry company.

The man he went to with his problem was Colonel Murch, who knew Millett's record of occupation duty in Japan and as Forward Observer for the 2d Battalion in Korea. He liked Millett, but shook his head when Millett mentioned a transfer to his outfit.

"There's nothing here at headquarters," he explained. "The only thing I could offer you would be one of the line companies."

Milletts smiled happily.

"I'll take Easy Company, sir."

But it wasn't quite that simple. First there was Millett's own battalion commander to consult, and this gentleman made no secret of the fact that he considered Millett completely crazy. Nonetheless, he arranged for Millett to put his request before Brigadier General George B. Barth, the Artillery commander. If the Old Man approved, the project would have his blessing, he said.

To Barth--a one-time infantryman--it was like losing one of his family. But he listened until Millett finished making his request, then extended his hand. "Congratulations, Captain Millett. Good luck to you--and Easy Company!"

And that's how Lew Millett swapped his crossed artillery cannon for infantry muskets.

Operation Punch was launched by Eighth Army in the early hours of February, 1951. Lew Millett was at last leading Easy Company in the attack. The company was spearheading north atop the id-spattered Pershing tanks of the 64th Tank Battalion.

They had been moving steadily, and without opposition through all the morning, but after midday the column drew fire from the heights which lay ahead of them. Easy Company got its orders from battalion: Dismount, form as skirmishers, attack!

Millett got his platoon leaders together and indicated how they would attack the hill.

"Pass the word along to fix bayonets," he ordered. "Move out in three minutes. Keep your eye on me."

The platoons wheeled into position and moved up the slope. It was a beautifully executed maneuver--but after storming the hill, Easy Company found empty holes, abandoned packs, and weapons. The enemy had not stayed to fight.

Operation Punch continued to roll north.

On February 5, Easy Company was moving through frozen rice paddy, when suddenly its 1st Platoon was pinned down as it moved in against a low, plateau-like ridge. Automatic weapons from the hill forced tanks and troops off the road, but to Millett it didn't appear that much of a scrap was at hand.

The Chinese held two strong points on twin peaks straddling the road. As the lead element of Easy approached a draw which would have afforded some cover, all hell broke loose.

"Second Platoon!" Millett hollered. "Fix bayonets--move in on the left flank of the 1st."

Then he ordered the 3d Platoon to support the attack with rifle, BAR, and machine gun fire. They had drawn in-coming artillery by this time, but Millett abandoned his fox hole command post, shouting, "C'mon with me!"

He dashed for a defilade position at the base of the hill and paused there for two minutes, while the 2d Platoon formed to the left of the 1st.

The Captain led the two-platoon attacking force.

"We'll get 'em with the bayonet! Let's go!" he yelled, as he started out.

Now that the Americans had left the "protection" at the base of the hill the enemy could bring his fire to bear. But the men had picked up Millett's yell, and they surged up the hill after the Captain.

The 1st Platoon, which had followed Millett to the base of the hill, had taken casualties as it stormed across an open paddy in full view of Red marksmen. Now it found its upward climb aided by a bulging rock formation on the ridgeline.

The 2d Platoon, which had moved into the base easily, now found itself a target of enemy gunners, entrenched on a high ridge 150 yards away in Fox Company's area.

To the rear, on a hill, the 3d Platoon still was laying down covering fire, but they were sweating. Having lost sight of the line of Easy Company riflemen, they were afraid that their bullets might be striking too close to their buddies.

As though to reassure them--and tell them it was okay to lift their fire--Captain Millett suddenly appeared on the skyline, rifle in one hand, waving with the other, calling his men forward. Even as he did so, Chinese Communist Force soldiers could be seen streaming out of fox holes, skittering down the reverse slope helter-skelter. Some bolted toward the right flank, to the enemy position in Fox Company's front. Easy's two assault platoons followed, bayonets flashing.

Up on a hillside to the rear, observers with the battalion command post gasped as they watched the audacity of Millett's attack. Colonel Murch later congratulated the captain and headquarters prepared a recommendation that the Distinguished Service Cross, the nation's second highest military decoration, be awarded to Captain Lewis Millett for his bold bayonet attack against the heavily entrenched foe.

Easy Company reached the approaches to Hill 180 about noon two days later. This hill--later to be known as Bayonet Hill--was actually one of a series of three knobs overlooking the I Corps route of march.

With his 3d Platoon in reserve, Millett moved up with the rest of the company, anticipating little or no action. He came abreast of the ridge fully intending to bypass it completely, since he was satisfied that the Chinese had once again pulled out.

Back in the 3d Platoon--dug in on top of a hill to the rear and right of the company--Private Victor Cozales scanned the ridge. There was something he didn't like about it--but he didn't know what it was. He lay there with the others in the platoon, ready to deliver covering fire should the company meet with any opposition. Cozales kept his eyes glued to his binoculars, scanning the ridge as Millett's party came abreast of it.

Suddenly he realized what was troubling him--there was too much foliage for the crest of an otherwise barren hill. He had to be sure. So he checked with the others in the platoon, and they all peered anxiously at the point now under suspicion. They called for the radioman to stand by to alert Captain Millett, when suddenly an enemy soldier showed himself on the ridgeline. Cozares hissed at the men near him to hold fire, but a nervous soldier fired wildly, and the enemy soldier disappeared.

Now the enemy knew his ruse had been detected--but he still held good cards. Part of Easy Company was now directly under his guns.

Lieutenant John T. Lammond radioed Millett and briefed him. Millett ordered Lammond to keep the 3d Platoon where it was, in position to provide hill-to-hill covering fire. He got his tanks off the road and told them to singe the hill up to the halfway mark until he told them to stop.

From here on, Millett told himself, it was all in the timing. He consulted his watch and gave himself ten minutes to get his attack underway.

Leaping aboard one of the tanks, he swung a .50 caliber machine gun right on the target he wanted covered and cut loose a long burst.

"Keep it going there!" he told the gunner as he dropped off the tank and moved on.

Quickly he wheeled and dashed out to the 1st Platoon which was in position behind a dike-like defilade on the roadside. He called to platoon leader Lieutenant Raimund Schulz to get the platoon ready to move up.

By this time the enemy had directed heavy fire toward Easy's attacking forces. Seventy-five yards away was a ditch that offered some protection--but the Reds were covering the field too thoroughly to take advantage of it. It was evident the 1st Platoon couldn't stay where they were. They were taking casualties at an alarming rate. First the light machine gun went dead--ruptured cartridge. Then the center of the platoon's line became silent, and Millett saw his attack crumbling away before it was even launched.

He sized up the situation, then scrambled out of his own position, and plunged into the 1st Platoon's thin, wavering line.

Spotting Sergeant First Class Floyd E. Cockrell, Millett yelled, "Get ready to move out! We're going up the hill! Fix bayonets! Charge! Everyone goes with me!"

263

He gestured with his own rifle and plunged out across the open field, hurdling the small rises and avoiding the furrows, miraculously never losing his feet. Cockrell and thirteen men followed. They hadn't left the dike a minute too soon. Enemy rifle and machine gun fire from Hill 180 suddenly zeroed-in on the spot they'd evacuated, and those who hadn't followed the captain immediately were cut down left and right as they spilled out in a vain attempt to catch up with Millett's group.

The base of the hill protected them from Red gunfire and artillery, and flinging himself against the slope, Millett paused there to give Schulz, Cockrell, and the rest of the men a chance to catch up.

The lowest of the three knobs was directly over them, part of its rim rounded off to form a conventional Korean burial mound. The center knob and the last rise were some twenty yards higher.

Milletts started up the first knob. As he reached the skyline, he spotted an enemy machine gun to his left on a ridge of somewhat higher elevation. Standing erect on the skyline he bellowed for an automatic rifle. Ray Velarde, one of Easy's BARmen raced up, and the Captain pointed out several key targets.

Private Jim Chung, one of Easy's ROK's, pointed to a position less than ten yards from Millett where eight enemy were squatting in their foxholes.

"Go ahead, Chung," Millett yelled, as he swung his M-1 in the direction indicated by the South Korean soldier. Millett got two, Chung the others in a quick tattoo of fire. Then Millett uncorked the pins from a couple of grenades and heaved them in for good measure.

Milletts got back to his radio and ordered Lammond to bring the 3d Platoon off its hill to join in the attack. Lammond's men responded quickly. They hadn't realized just how slippery the terrain to their front was--it was, in fact, a tremendous sheet of ice, and they came slithering down mostly on their rumps, somehow managing to cling to their weapons. Despite a withering hail of enemy fire, it took only five minutes until Lammond and Sergeant Donald Brockmeier had the platoon assembled on the left flank of the 1st Platoon at the base of Hill 180.

The company commander met the platoon as it moved into position. He told Lammond: "Attack straight up the hill!" Before the words were out of his mouth, part of the platoon under Sergeant Brockmeier had already started its assault, hoping to circle behind the enemy positions in the heights.

The Reds seemed to sense that this attacking force meant to dig them out, and not one enemy soldier made a move to surrender during the bloodletting that followed.

From the saddle that Jim Chung had raked with automatic rifle fire, two grenades came sailing down. Millett, out in front of the others, ducked away and continued to move straight up. More grenades came--in clusters. Millett had to perform a dance to keep from being splattered.

As he moved back and forth, he came to within fifteen feet of a Red buffalo gun--normally an antitank weapon. It was strictly anti-personnel now, firing point-blank at one of Millett's soldiers who dodged the five rounds aimed at him. Each shell whistled by Millett's ear, but he never even noticed, he was so intent on trying to locate the tier of fox holes which hid the defenders from his view.

His own men, who were in a sort of gully, couldn't see him any longer, and grenades came at him from both sides. Twenty yards away one of his sergeants saw what was happening, but he was unable to get contact with the men in the gully to tell them that their grenades were endangering their own captain.

A cluster of grenades came from the Reds. Millett went into his dancing and dodging act again. Eight detonations nicked the terrain around him--and then a ninth exploded behind him and some of its steel found a target in his back and legs. He could feel the blood coursing down his back, drenching his shirt and jacket.

Abandoning his plan for a straight-up assault, he circled to his right, passing by a series of empty fox holes as he moved. Suddenly he was looking the buffalo gun right in the teeth as he rounded the ridge. It was the first time he realized it was there, although its fire had whistled by his ear a few minutes earlier.

"Let's go!" he screamed. "Use grenades and cold steel! Kill 'em with the bayonet!" As the men hesitated, for an instant, he cursed them bitterly, and howling unprintable epithets--some of them in Chinese--he raced alone into the gun position. Stunned at first by his display of temper the men took up his cry as they followed.

But he was yards ahead of them. He tossed three hand grenades rapidly, and then, all alone, he rushed the V-shaped gun position, bayonet gleaming in the glare of ice and sun.

He attacked the inner right wing of the V, and with a savage thrust jammed the bayonet into the enemy soldier's face. He had to fire a round to get the rifle free--but nothing could have stopped him. The Red soldier at the apex of the V had been stunned by the grenade concussion, but now he reached for a grenade. Before he could turn it loose, Millett was at him like a wildcat, driving his bayonet into his throat, ripping him open. The third man--at the left wing of the V--brought his rifle to bear, but too late. Millett slashed his chest with the bayonet. While Millett was finishing off the third man in

the gun emplacement, his men entered headlong into a cold-steel charge against the Chinese who came up out of their holes to meet them. Urged on by their captain, who waved his rifle aloft as he vaulted out of the gun emplacement, Easy Company charged, bellowing and screaming, firing from the hip, ripping with the bayonet--until the ridge was cleared of the enemy.

It was later determined that there had been 200 enemy troops on the hill when the fight began. Forty-seven of them sprawled dead--18 killed by bayonets in the first company-strength bayonet charge since the first World War.

A U.S. army observer, Brigadier General S.L.A. Marshall, former Historian of the ETO, termed Millett's action the "greatest bayonet attack by U.S. soldiers since Cold Harbor in the Civil War."

(From *ibid.*, pp. 175-183.)

* * * * *

In the first spring following the Chinese intervention, the Eighth Army ordered the 25th Infantry Division to recross the Han River and begin its recapture of the area relinquished to the Chinese in the previous fall. the assault crossing fell to the 35th Infantry Regiment, to be supported by Company A, 89th Medium Tank Battalion.

Since it was estimated that the Han was seven to nine feet deep, the tanks were not expected to cross, but merely to support the infantry assault with fire support and to themselves cross in the evening after the engineers had completed a fifty-ton capacity bridge.

After careful reconnaissance, the 89th Battalion commander, LTC Welborn G. Dolvin, suggested to CPT Herbert A. Brannon, commander of A Company, that he consider trying to ford his tanks with the infantry. He did not order the Captain to attempt the crossing, but only suggested that he fully investigate the possibilities, and that the advantages of immediately available fire support on the far side with the infantry made it "worth a gamble."

CPT Brannon studied the aerial photos and decided to hazard one tank on an attempted crossing. His plan was to send the tank across dragging a cable from the tank retriever so that it could be pulled back if it went under or if the river floor was too muddy. LT Thomas J. Allie, the 3d Platoon leader volunteered to take the tank across.

The only good place the tanks might get across was about a thousand yards upstream of the infantry crossing site, at a point where the river divided into two channels around a small island or sand bar. After CPT Brannon performed his recon, he ordered all platoon leaders to make theirs.

On the snowy morning of 7 March 1951, the tank company first supported the infantry by fire as they crossed, using ammo stored on the rear decks of the tanks and saving their combat loads for use if the tank crossing was successful. They then moved upstream to the crossing site.

Lt.Col. James H. Lee (infantry battalion commander) and Captain Brannon watched the river-crossing operation from the battalion's observation post. At 0740, when he received word that all assault units of his battalion were across, Colonel Lee, who was skeptical of the success of the crossing, told Captain Brannon that the north bank was secure. "You can try crossing if you wish."

Captain Brannon called Lieutenant Allie, who had offered to take the first tank into the water.

Already within two hundred yards of the river, the two vehicles moved to the edge of the water and stopped to connect the winch cable from the recovery vehicle to Lieutenant Allie's tank. About 0800 Allie's tank went into the water, heading toward the west (downstream) end of the sandy island near the middle of the river. Lieutenant Allie stood erect in the open hatch, calling out instructions to the driver over the tank intercommunication system. The water was only about three feet deep, and since the Sherman tank was designed to ford water to that depth, there was no difficulty except that the speed of the tank, limited by the speed at which the motor-driven winch on the recovery vehicle could pay out the cable, was slow. After the tank had gone two thirds of the distance to the island, the winch suddenly caught. The moving tank dragged the other vehicle for several feet, and then the cable broke, pulling apart at the coupling fastened to Lieutenant Allie's tank. Relieved to find the tank able to move freely, the tank driver (Sgt. Guillory Johnson) increased his speed. Within a few minutes after leaving the south bank, the tank reached the lower end of the sand bar.

Originally, Lieutenant Allie had planned to proceed straight across, but once on the island, he could see at its east end what appeared to be footings for an old bridge. Crossing to the up-river end of the island, Lieutenant Allie turned into the water again. The tank dipped steeply into water that momentarily covered the hatches over Sergeant Johnson and his assistant driver, wetting both men. An experienced tank driver, Johnson at once increased the speed of the tank to keep the water from closing in behind the tank and drowning out the engine. The tank climbed out of the water at each of the three old earthen bridge footings but, after a few seconds, it would plunge again into the water deep enough to come up to the turret ring. Nevertheless, after being in the water for two minutes or less, the tank reached the opposite bank.

After radioing back for the next tank in line to follow, Lieutenant Allie moved forward a short distance and then waited for the rest of his platoon. SFC Starling W. Harmon, following the same route with his tank, joined his platoon leader within five minutes. Wanting to have only one tank in the river at a time, Lieutenant Allie waited until Sergeant Harmon was on the north bank of the Han River before calling for the third tank. Because its escape hatch had jarred loose during the firing that morning, the third tank flooded out and stalled in the comparatively shallow water south of the island. Lieutenant Allie ordered his two remaining tanks, one at a time, to proceed around the stalled tank and cross.

With two tanks, Lieutenant Allie set out at 0830 to join the infantry. Having advanced a little more than a thousand yards, the infantrymen had stalled temporarily near a road that cut across the tip of land between the Pukhan and the Han. Enemy fire coming from a small hill and from a railroad embankment six hundred yards ahead had stopped them. The two tanks moved forward, directing their fire against the small hill. When fire from the hill stopped, the two tank crews turned their cannon toward the railroad embankment. There were six freight cars standing on the tracks. They had been burned and shot up, apparently during an air raid. The Chinese had placed three machine guns to fire under the cars into the area to the south. With their own machine guns and 12 or 15 rounds from their cannon, the tank crews quickly silenced the enemy guns. The infantrymen moved up even with the two tanks, a gain of six hundred yards. As the infantrymen moved beyond the railroad tracks, following the two tanks which ranged ahead, three other enemy machine guns commenced firing. Lieutenant Allie spotted one, laid on it with the 76mm gun and fired two rounds, the second of which threw parts of bodies and weapons into the air. The other two tanks of Lieutenant Allie's platoon arrived in time to take part in the firing, and a tank commanded by MSgt. Curtis D. Harrell located and silenced another machine gun. Then, all four tanks raked the enemy positions with their coaxial machine guns during a thirty-minute period while the front line advanced approximately seven hundred yards to the objective.

In the meantime, as soon as Lieutenant Allie's tanks were on the north bank, Captain Brannon started another platoon across. Within twenty minutes these five tanks were moving forward to support another infantry company and the last platoon of tanks began to cross. By 1000 all Company A's tanks except one were moving forward with the assault companies; by noon Colonel Lee's 3d Battalion had reached its objective. The remaining tank, which had flooded out earlier in the morning when its escape hatch fell out, was repaired by midafternoon and successfully crossed the river.

The river crossing was a success and, as Colonel Lee believed, the close support furnished by the tanks was a big factor in the outcome of the operation.

Too often there are recorded in tales of battle instances of commanders failing to remember the principle of the objective. Obstacles and fleeting attractions divert them from the accomplishment of their missions. A successful commander will always engage in a relentless pursuit of the end to be gained, but he will not be stubborn without reason. Rather, he tempers his tenacity with a spirit of adaptation to the fluid circumstances of the battlefield. Only explicit orders from a superior commander will relieve him from bending every effort of his command to the mission.

Captain Brannon and Lieutenant Allie were not content with a mere routine execution of close support. Once assigned their mission they showed courage, initiative, resourcefulness, and resolution in accomplishing it. When Scharnhorst was asked to comment on the appointment of Blucher to high command in the German Army, he wrote, "Is it not the manner in which the leaders carry out the task of command, of impressing their resolution in the hearts of others, that makes them warriors far more than all other aptitudes or faculties which theory may expect of them?"

(From Russell A. Gugeler, Combat Actions in Korea, pp. 141-143.)

Regard your soldiers as your children,
and they will follow you into the
deepest valleys; look on them as your
own beloved sons, and they will stand
by you even unto death.

If, however, you are indulgent, but
unable to make your authority felt;
kind hearted but unable to enforce
your commands; and incapable, moreover
of quelling disorder, then your
soldiers must be likened to spoiled
children; they are useless for any
practical purpose.

Sun Tzu, The Art of War

A month after CPT Brannon's crossing of the Han, in another sector, the U.S. IX Corps renewed an attack with its two divisions--the U.S. 1st Marine Division and an ROK Division--on the Chinese near the center of the Korean peninsula. The attack was successful for two days, until the Chinese counter-attacked. It appeared that the Chinese had let them advance without opposition, preferring to strike back when the friendly forces were extended and before they had time to dig in. By 2000 hours, the Chinese were several thousand yards behind friendly lines, firing on artillery units that had displaced forward that afternoon.

Whether LTC Leon F. Lavoie had read Sun Tzu is unknown; certainly his troops behaved as if he had trained them according to Sun Tzu's precept quoted above. Commander of the 92d Armored Field Artillery Battalion, LTC Lavoie's unit was providing fire support to both divisions when the breakthrough began. His liaison officer to the ROKs radioed him that "someone's pushed the panic button up here." Stopping his jeep to warn IX Corps Artillery of the situation by telephone, he immediately returned to his battalion.

The 92d Armored Field Artillery Battalion, reinforcing the fires of both divisions of the corps, had moved forward that afternoon to a point near the boundary between the ROKs and marines, a little less than half way from Chichon-ni to Sachang-ni. The road between these two villages, following a deep river gorge, was exceedingly narrow. By 2130, when Colonel Lavoie got back to his battalion, the road was jammed with vehicles and ROK infantrymen were moving back pell-mell along both sides of it. Putting his entire battalion on a man-battle-stations basis, Colonel Lavoie and his staff officers tried desperately to collect stragglers and stop the withdrawal, but the momentum was too great by the time the soldiers reached Colonel Lavoie's battalion and most of them continued determinedly on.

When morning came of 23 April the Chinese, in possession of a three-mile-deep corridor west of the 1st Marine Division, turned to attack the Marine left flank. They completely overran one ROK artillery battalion and the 2d Rocket Field Artillery Battery, both of which lost all equipment. The 987th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, partially overrun, lost some.

Colonel Lavoie's 92d Field Artillery Battalion (a self-propelled 155mm howitzer unit) moved back battery by battery to a new position near the Pukhan River south of Chichon-ni. Batteries registered as soon as they were laid.

Battery C, in position north of a trail-size road through the new battalion position, placed its howitzers on the reverse slope of an incline that offered defilade. Battery A and Headquarters Battery were in a rice paddy south of the road with Battery A, 17th Field Artillery Battalion. Battery A of the 17th was an 8-inch howitzer outfit temporarily attached to the 92d Field Artillery Battalion to replace its own Battery B which, in turn, was attached to the 17th Field Artillery Battalion.

Late in the afternoon the last howitzer was laid and ready to fire. The general military situation was tense. The artillerymen, having had little sleep during the past thirty-six hours, were tired, but immediately went to work establishing their usual perimeter for the night. Colonel Lavoie--tall, and gentle almost to the point of shyness--insisted upon always having a well-fortified perimeter. Even

when smiling, as he usually was, he had a way of being obdurately firm about the condition of the battalion perimeter, as he also was about standards of performance. Convinced that his responsibility as an artillery commander was to insure continuous artillery support to the infantry, he also reasoned that the very time when the infantrymen would most urgently need supporting artillery might well coincide with an enemy attack on his own perimeter. Colonel Lavoie had therefore developed a standard defensive perimeter that, from the outside toward the gun batteries in the center, consisted of patrols covering neighboring terrain; outposts, usually centered around a halftrack, for warning and delaying; a dug-in and fully manned main battle line just beyond grenade range of the battalion's critical installations; and a highly mobile reserve in the center. This reserve force usually was made up of two or three halftracks with 8 or 10 men for each vehicle.

Colonel Lavoie's acting executive officer (Major Roy A. Tucker) set up the perimeter on the afternoon of 23 April. Because of the limited time before darkness, which came about 1745, the perimeter was not as elaborately developed as usual, nor was there time to patrol nearby terrain. However, Major Tucker did establish a complete system of security outposts with trip flares ahead of the outposts, a complete telephone communication system, and a radio net as an alternate means of communication. He had laid out the main battle line but only a few positions were dug in at darkness. There was no defensive wire, demolitions were not out, nor had the men dug in and sandbagged such critical installations as the fire direction center and the communications center. These tasks had a lower priority and usually waited until the second or third day of the process of developing the battalion perimeter.

Members of outpost detachments ate chow early and went to their halftracks or ground-mounted machine-gun positions before dusk in order to be familiar with their sectors of responsibility, fields of fire, and to check their communications. Thereafter, except for relief detachments, no traffic was allowed to the outposts or beyond the battalion perimeter. Colonel Lavoie wanted security guards to heed and challenge all movement or activity. Four to eight men manned each security outpost, half of them being on duty at a time. Colonel Lavoie inspected the perimeter defenses just before dark, pointing out to his men the Marine positions on the hill to the front.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

At 0230 Colonel Lavoie returned to his command post. Although he was very tired, he could not sleep and scarcely had time for it anyway. He reviewed the displacement plan, being particularly concerned about getting the 8-inch howitzers on the road at 0400. Battery commanders were called at 0315, and Colonel Lavoie gave them the complete plan and order for the move. He instructed his commanders to serve a hot breakfast.

The heavy howitzers moved out on schedule. At the same time guards were going through the battalion area waking all personnel. Within a few minutes there was the sound of trucks moving about and the usual commotion that goes with the job of getting up, packing equipment, striking tents, and loading trucks--all in the dark.

Gun sections still manned the howitzers, firing harassing and interdiction missions. The range had decreased during the night and the cannoneers were aware of increased machine-gun activity on the hill mass in front of the battalion.

Breakfast was ready at 0445. Chow lines formed in all batteries.

First sign of daylight appeared ten or fifteen minutes after 0500. Most of the men had finished breakfast. Most of the pyramidal tents, used because of cool weather, were down. In Headquarters Battery only the command post and kitchen tents were standing. In Battery A the kitchen tent was still up. The communications system was still intact but commanders had pulled in most of their outlying security installations. Equipment and personnel were just about ready for march order.

Colonel Lavoie, having eaten an early breakfast, had just returned to the mess tent where an attendant was pouring him a cup of coffee. Major Raymond F. Hotopp (battalion S3) prepared to leave on reconnaissance at 0530, placed his personal belongings in his jeep and walked over to see whether the battalion commander was ready. Capt. John F. Gerrity (commanding Battery A) was getting into his jeep to join Colonel Lavoie on reconnaissance.

An unidentified artilleryman from Battery C, with a roll of toilet paper in his hand, walked toward the cemetery in front of the howitzers. As he approached the mounds in the graveyard, he saw several Chinese crawling on their bellies toward his battery. Startled, he yelled, threw the toilet paper at an enemy soldier, turned, and ran. The Chinese soldier ducked involuntarily. At that moment, someone tripped a flare outside the perimeter. Capt. Bernard G. Raftery (commanding Battery C) looked at his watch. It was 0520.

Machine guns opened fire. At first many thought someone had accidentally tripped a machine gun, since the marines were supposed to be in front of the artillery positions. But when the firing increased there was no more doubt. Men in the mess line scattered for cover. Major Hotopp dropped to the ground and dived under a halftrack. SFC Charles R. Linder (chief of section), warming his feet over the running "tank" motor, jumped off and took cover behind the vehicle. Most of the men took cover wherever it was most quickly available.

212

Colonel Lavoie saw a bullet hole suddenly appear in the side of the mess tent. He ran outside. "Man battle stations!" he yelled, "Man battle stations!" and headed for his command post tent to get into communication with his battery commanders.

Captain Raftery looked at Lt. Joseph N. Hearin (Battery C executive). "This is it!" he said, scrambling to his feet. "Let's go!" He and Hearin got out of their command post tent at the same time.

SFC George T. Powell (Battery C chief of detail), anxious about some new men who had never seen combat, took off toward their section of the main battle line. When he arrived at the nearest halftracks, he found his men already manning the machine guns. Several others were setting up a machine gun on a ground mount. No longer anxious, Powell relaxed and began to enjoy the battle. Several other friendly machine guns were already in action.

SFC Willis V. Ruble, Jr. (Headquarters Battery motor sergeant), who at first thought the noise was caused by someone throwing wads of ammunition into the fire, ran for a halftrack and unzipped the canvas cover on a caliber .50 machine gun while several slugs whistled past, and he then looked about for a target. He saw four or five persons in the field in front of Battery A's position. They were wearing dirty white civilian clothes and Ruble thought they were South Koreans until he saw one of them carrying a rifle. He fired three short bursts, knocked one of them down, spun another one around. Just then he noticed flashes on the hill in front. Figuring that the small-arms fire could take care of the enemy troops close in, Ruble turned his machine gun toward the distant flashes.

SFC James R. White (Battery A) remembered only being at a machine gun on a halftrack but did not know how he got there. By this time, a minute or two after the first shot had been fired, enemy fire was so intense that tracer bullets formed a thin red arch between the battalion's position and Hill 200, from which most of the enemy long-range fire came. The ammunition belt in White's machine gun was crossed. White was shaking so badly that he could not get it straightened, and he was afraid to expose himself above the ring mount. After a bit, he stood up, straightened the belt, and began firing.

The battalion executive officer (Major Tucker), who had started out to inspect the perimeter soon after the firing commenced, opened the rear door of White's halftrack and cautioned him and several other men in the vehicle to pick targets before firing. White then waited until he saw the location of the enemy machine guns before he fired. Visually following the tracers back toward the hill, White was able to locate an enemy emplacement. He opened fire again. He could see his own tracers hitting the hill, so he walked his fire in on the enemy position, then held it there until his belt gave out. White then

reloaded his gun with a fresh belt (105 rounds) but did not fire at once. The man firing the caliber .30 machine gun on the same half-track was playing it cool; he was firing in short bursts at enemy in a field across the road.

Within ten minutes or less the exchange of fire had become a noisy roar. Enemy bullets cut up the telephone wires that were strung overhead, forcing the battalion to rely on its radios.

Captain Raftery stood in the middle of Battery C's area trying to determine enemy intentions. The bulk of enemy fire against the battery appeared to be coming from Hill 200, where Raftery estimated there were six machine-gun emplacements, which the Chinese had reached by old communication trenches. As these entrenched troops acted as a base of fire, enemy riflemen took concealed positions in the cemetery while others, armed only with hand grenades, crawled toward the howitzers. Captain Raftery thought the Chinese were concentrating on his No. 5 howitzer--the most vulnerable because of its forward position. Enemy fire in that area was so intense that the artillerymen could not man the machine guns on the nearest halftrack. Deciding that the enemy was trying to knock out one howitzer and blow up the powder and ammunition for psychological effect, he called the chief of No. 5 howitzer section and instructed him to pull his "tank" back into defilade and on line with Nos. 4 and 6.

Behind the No. 4 howitzer, Lieutenant Hearin tried to see what the men were shooting at. Flashes on the hill were 600 to 1,000 yards away, and it seemed unusual that the enemy would attack from so far. He looked for enemy elements coming in under the base of fire. Suddenly he noticed men of the battery running from the No. 5 to the No. 6 howitzer. Several feet behind them, grenades were bursting.

Jumping on a halftrack, Hearin swung the caliber .50 machine gun around and shot a Chinese grenadier who was crawling up on the No. 5 piece. A couple of other machine-gunners swung their guns to help Hearin and, among them, they shot a half dozen enemy attempting to destroy the No. 5 howitzer.

Under cover of this fire, Sgt. Theral J. Hatley (chief of section) ran forward and backed his vehicle out of immediate reach of the enemy grenadiers, crushing one who lay concealed underneath.

After the initial scramble to their positions, Colonel Lavoie's men settled down to returning the fire with enthusiasm. Having staged so many "dry runs," the battalion commander was pleased to see the results of the practice. The firing, however, was getting out of hand and, although there was plenty of ammunition and more at Service Battery's position three miles away, Colonel Lavoie feared that they were experiencing only an initial attack calculated to pin them down while a larger

force maneuvered from the west to seal the river defile and destroy the only bridge over the Pukhan. As soon as his executive officer returned from checking defensive positions, Colonel Lavoie changed places with him and set out to inspect the battle line. He wanted to see for himself the positions and the trend of the action, to be seen by the men for whatever effect that might have upon their morale, and to persuade the men to stop aimless and unnecessary firing. He sought out his three battery commanders.

"You must control and limit your fire to specific targets," Lavoie told them. "Make every bullet count."

Captain Raftery, who thought his Battery C was under the heaviest enemy fire, defended his men and their volume of fire. "Sir," he answered, "Battery C has Chinks all through its area."

"Are they dead or alive?"

"Both," said Raftery.

"Well, don't worry about the dead ones," Colonel Lavoie told him; "just take care of the live ones and make every bullet count."

Lavoie continued around the perimeter. He opened the rear doors on the halftracks and crawled up to talk with the machine gunners to ask them to cooperate in firing only at specific targets, and to tell them how successfully the battalion was holding off the Chinese.

One man told him he'd better get down. "It's dangerous up here," he explained. Others, reassured, only grinned.

On two occasions Lavoie found groups of two or three men huddled in the bed of a halftrack. He told them to get out and help: "I'm scared too. There's nothing wrong with being scared as long as you do your part." Ashamed, they promptly returned to their proper positions.

In Battery A's area, enemy fire was coming from Hill 454 on the left-front as well as from Hill 200. Enemy snipers behind piles of rubble and rock were also firing from the field directly in front of Battery A. There was no haze and the artillerymen could clearly see enemy soldiers on the hills a thousand yards away.

Returning to his command post, Colonel Lavoie received a radio message from the Marine regimental headquarters objecting to excessive firing and ordering the artillerymen to cease fire.

"You're firing on friendly troops," the officer complained.

"Those friendly troops," Colonel Lavoie argued, "are inflicting casualties on my battalion."

While Lavoie was explaining the situation to the Marine commander, Major Tucker made another round of the defensive position, rallying the men. The exchange of fire was still brisk, but the artillerymen appeared to be holding their own well and had recovered from their impulse to fire just to make noise.

Having persuaded the marines that his artillerymen had not been seized by panic, Colonel Lavoie called Battery A by radio and said he wanted to talk with Captain Gerrity. When the latter reached the command post tent, Colonel Lavoie instructed him to shift his battery--howitzer by howitzer--several hundreds yards to the east, thereby reducing the size of the perimeter. When the battery of 8-inch howitzers had pulled out at 0400 it left a gap in the perimeter and also left Gerrity's battery vulnerable to an attack from the west, from which direction the battalion commander still thought the Chinese would probably make a larger attack designed to overrun his position. Gerrity called his battery by radio, and gave it the code word for "close station and march order."

While the two officers, both of them lying on the ground near the radio and in front of the tent, were still talking, Colonel Lavoie spotted two enemy machine guns that were firing a high ratio of tracer bullets into the battalion's position. Pointing them out to Captain Gerrity, he asked him to take them under direct fire with his 155mm howitzers. Gerrity took off toward his battery position.

Bullets were still ricocheting against the "tanks" and halftracks when the close-station order reached Battery A. Captain Gerrity had given the order only to alert his men for the 300- or 400-yard shift. The artillerymen were reluctant to move and expose themselves to enemy fire while they cranked up the spades and prepared to move. Sergeant White, firing a machine gun from a halftrack, stood up, exposing himself completely, and shouted instructions at the men. Every man jumped to his job, and within a few minutes the battery was ready to move. It was about 0545--twenty-five minutes after the enemy first attacked.

Captain Gerrity, out of breath from running, returned to his battery just as the vehicles were ready to move. He shouted orders for the firing mission, the artillerymen dropped trails again and opened fire on the machine guns Colonel Lavoie had seen. The range was a thousand yards or less. After a few rounds one howitzer made a direct hit. Colonel Lavoie saw fragments of Chinese soldiers thrown twenty feet or higher in the air. Eight or ten Chinese soldiers suddenly appeared running from a trench about a hundred yards away from the last explosion. Several machine guns immediately swung toward them and killed three or four. Having destroyed the two machine guns, Battery A completed its displacement, tightening up the perimeter.

MSgt. John D. Elder appeared at the command post tent to get instructions for moving ammunition trucks from Service Battery. He wanted to know if Colonel Lavoie still planned to move.

"We were going to move," answered the Colonel, "but now we'll wait until we secure this position."

Colonel Lavoie set out to make another round of his defensive positions. His indifference to the enemy fire was a steadying influence. As he walked through the area, talking with the men and cautioning them to conserve ammunition, he noticed a great change in his troops. Over their initial scare, they now appeared to be enjoying themselves. A great deal of enemy fire continued to come into the area even though Chinese machine guns seemed subdued by this time, but the men no longer hesitated to expose themselves in order to fire their weapons effectively. Realizing that they were holding their own and winning, they had lost the fear and uneasiness Colonel Lavoie had seen on his first trip around the area. It had been replaced by a cocky sort of confidence.

A young artilleryman, usually shy, spotted a small group of Chinese crawling through weeds toward the fire direction center tent. "Look at them sons of bitches," he said. "They think they're going to make it." Standing up he aimed and fired. "I got one!" he exclaimed. Several other men began firing at the same group and soon destroyed it.

Several Marine tanks rumbled down the road. No one had asked for help but the Marine commander sent them over to clean out the area in front of the battalion. Taking up positions north of the road and in front of Battery A, they blasted the hills and raked the field with machine-gun fire. Several artillerymen left their positions and set out "looking for Chinks."

Sgt. Austin E. Roberts (machine-gun sergeant) organized ten men and walked across the road toward the northwest. After they had gone only a few yards, a Chinese jumped up in front of them. One of Roberts's men fired, hitting an American Thompson submachine gun the enemy was carrying. The Chinese dropped it and held up his hand.

Roberts shouted, "Don't shoot! Don't shoot!" and then sent his prisoner, guarded by two artillerymen, to battalion headquarters.

The remaining eight men, working with the tanks, went on across the field examining each hole and clearing the area for four hundred yards. They found no more enemy soldiers.

In the meantime, the Marine regiment that the 92d Field Artillery Battalion was supporting called a fire mission. Colonel Lavoie assigned it to Battery C, instructing the battery to transfer its radio to the Marine channel so it could receive the mission direct.

Captain Raftery's howitzers were engaged in delivering direct fire against nearby hills. Leaving one to continue with that mission, he relaid the other five howitzers to support the marines. This was the first "live" mission that morning, although the entire battalion had been firing harassing and interdiction missions before the enemy attack. Raftery then organized about twenty men into a skirmish line to cross the battery front. Moving through the cemetery and beyond, the force killed seven Chinese and captured one who had to be pulled out of his hole. The Marine tanks killed several others who attempted to escape back to the high ground.

* * * * *

By 0730 the situation permitted displacement of the batteries. The battalion suffered 4 men killed and 11 wounded during the action. It lost no equipment. Marine units later reported finding 179 enemy dead in the area around the battalion perimeter, all presumed killed during the attack.

Colonel Lavoie was pleased with the performance of his men. The artillerymen shared a new feeling of confidence and pride. They had proved they could defend themselves.

"Artillery, the Colonel said, "if it makes up its mind, will set itself up so that it can defend itself from enemy infantry action."

There is no doubt that on 24 April 1951, the 92d Armored Field Artillery Battalion acquitted itself with great honor. For the military student the question is: Why? Part of the answer is found in the narrative. Good leadership is evident at all echelons--leadership based on knowledge and experience that inspired confidence and promoted cooperation. With each man accepting his share of duty the 92d Armored Field Artillery Battalion could not be made to panic. Individuals responded with the initiative of free men who know discipline without tyranny.

Although it is not mentioned in the narrative, Colonel Lavoie had, at the time of this action, commanded the battalion for about twenty months. He had trained it, and now he would fight it. Training will make or break an organization. Only by setting and maintaining high standards of performance during training can a commander expect similar standards in combat. It should be noted when estimating the state of training of the 92d Armored Field Artillery Battalion that the narrative does not once mention a weapon's jamming.

Standing operating procedures come from training. When not carried to a mechanical extreme they save time and help to minimize oversights. Because Colonel Lavoie had insisted in training that the 92d habitually fire from a defensive perimeter, its occupation and organization of position on 23 April went smoothly. It was not a new maneuver--it was SOP.

(From *ibid.*, pp. 155-165.)

VIETNAM

Studying American leadership during the Vietnam War poses a more difficult problem for the researcher than that of most other American involvements in combat. Histories of the war tend to have as their focus higher level operations or to be partisan accounts attempting to show that America's involvement was proper or improper according to the viewpoint of the author. For many reasons, particularly the unpopularity of the war in the United States, there are far fewer personal accounts of the experiences of the individual soldier than exist for other wars. Personal accounts, like the other histories, tend to be obsessed with the author's bias at the expense of objectivity.

Some of the best accounts of the leadership, good and bad, of the American involvement in Vietnam are to be found in the novels of that war. Since this is a historical study of documented events, these will not be considered, but it is a point for the student of leadership to keep in mind.

Shortly after the arrival of the First Air Cavalry Division in the fall of 1965, both it and the regular soldiers of the North Vietnamese Army were spoiling for a fight. They found it in the Chu Pong Massif of Central South Vietnam, and fought one of the "few decisive battles" of that war in October and November of that year.

As the NVA observed the movements of the brigades of the division, they interpreted that by mid-November the division was withdrawing. Determined to regain the initiative, the communist commander determined to make an attack on Plei Me on 16 November. A newly arrived 66th Regiment would make the attack, supported by the 32d and 33d Regiments. Before the attack could occur, further shifts in the American forces frustrated that possibility, but opened another--that of trapping and destroying an isolated American battalion. On the morning of 14 November, the amazed communists watched helicopters land in a small clearing near them, delivering, they thought, a battalion to its demise at their hands.

Lieutenant Colonel Harold G. Moore, commanding officer of the 1st Infantry Battalion, 7th Cavalry, was among the lead elements in this battalion to touch down. A twenty-year veteran, having entered the army from West Point in 1945, Moore was a rugged professional soldier who worried that the North Vietnamese might get away into Cambodia before his green battalion, which had not yet met any serious opposition, could get a taste of them. He needn't have been concerned; commanders of the two NVA regiments similarly hoped the Americans would sit still long enough for their troops to fall on them. Moore was the first man out of the choppers. When he hit the ground, running and firing his rifle into the tree-line he was most worried about getting all of his unit shuttled into the area as rapidly as possible. With singular lack of poetic foresight, he dubbed the 100 by 200 meter landing zone simply "X-Ray." Inspecting the tiny clearing for fighting positions as relays of helicopters ferried his companies in, he glanced with distaste at a number of huge anthills crawling with red ants; soldiers, he knew, hated

to dig foxholes near the ferocious insects. Peering into the quiet, sparse tree lines around him, Moore had no idea that he was triggering the biggest battle yet, but he had a clear and eerie sensation that a real fight was on the way. By midday most of the battalion had arrived. By then, also, the North Vietnamese had worked their way forward almost into assaulting positions.

While checking the landing zone, one of the squads flushed a North Vietnamese straggler. He was unarmed, dressed in a dirty khaki uniform, and carried an empty canteen. Moore, who had brought an interpreter along with him, quickly questioned the woebegone captive. He stated that he had eaten only bananas for five days, and that there were three battalions on the nearby mountain who wanted very much to kill Americans but had been unable to find them.

Based on the information gleaned from the prisoner, Moore sent "B" Company to occupy a finger of high ground a short distance beyond the landing zone. That precautionary move may have been what saved his battalion. At 1245, "B" Company ran head-on into NVA soldiers, surprising both sides and starting the battle slightly before the attackers were ready. A roaring firefight gradually built up. In a short time, the commander of "B" Company reported that he was under heavy attack by at least two enemy companies. Moore realized that his battalion's baptism of fire would be, in his words, "a fight to the finish."

On hearing the infantry exchanging fire, NVA gunners brought a barrage of rocket and mortar fire crashing down on the landing zone. Hovering helicopters frantically veered up and away to escape the rain of high explosive rounds. Startled soldiers dove to the ground; the anthills, absorbing some of the whistling shrapnel, suddenly looked friendly.

In the initial melee, "B" Company and the North Vietnamese became confusingly mixed. To restore order, the company commander withdrew his men to a defensible position nearer the rest of the battalion, but one platoon was unable to fight its way back. Counting only twenty-six men and himself, the platoon leader grimly gave the order to dig in where they were. Meanwhile, Moore directed "A" Company to move up alongside "B." That company also struck approaching NVA units. About that time "C" Company fought off an assault on the west side of "X-Ray." The entire battalion was engaged.

The 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry, had entered the day's fighting with only 68 percent of its strength--20 officers and 411 men of an authorized 23 and 610. Sickness, rear area guards, and administrative requirements had robbed Moore of a third of his manpower before the battle ever began. Understrength, the battalion was quickly overextended. While bringing in air strikes and supporting artillery

fires, Moore urgently requested reinforcements. Despite the heavy fire on the landing zone, the 3rd Brigade commander sent in a company from another battalion. It landed safely and became Moore's reserve.

With that reinforcement, and with all available supporting fires pounding in close to his position, Moore was able to hold on. Forced to attack prematurely, the North Vietnamese struck "X-Ray" piecemeal, providing the American commander the opportunity to shift his forces in order to repel each assault in turn. The struggle was furious and the outcome often in doubt, although Moore and his men were too busy to worry about their odds. Luck rode with the cavalry that afternoon; at one point, for instance, Captain Ramon A. Nadal, wanting a smoke screen, mistakenly brought white phosphorous artillery rounds right onto his own "A" Company positions, repulsing the attackers and miraculously not hurting a single American. The fortuitous error saved much of the company. Luck, shrewdness, courage, and most of all, overwhelming firepower combined to beat off all assaults.

At dusk action slackened around "X-Ray," but the enemy continued through the night trying to overrun "B" Company's isolated platoon. Only seven members of the gallant little group survived the night intact--eight died at their posts and twelve were wounded--but they refused to buckle. Dawn's light revealed two score enemy bodies sprawled around their tight position; perhaps that many more had been dragged away by retreating NVA troops.

Having reorganized during darkness, elements of both NVA regiments launched an all-out, coordinated attack at first light against Moore's perimeter. Swarming out of the jungle they surged screaming into "X-Ray." The struggle quickly reached the hand-to-hand stage; victory balanced on bayonets and grenades and guts. It came down to a question of which side would crack first. Fighting with a valor born of discipline and desperation, the Americans held, sending the North Vietnamese streaming back with awesome losses. Throughout, fire support was massive. Artillery rounds rained in by the thousands, tactical air strikes came by the score, and, starting that afternoon, B-52 bombers began to work over the Chu Pong redoubt. By noon more U.S. reinforcements had arrived, some by air, some overland through the jungle. Lieutenant Colonel Moore immediately mounted a counterattack to recover the survivors of his cut-off platoon. That ended the fighting for the day.

During the second long night in "X-Ray," cavalrymen fended off several weak, piecemeal attacks. When daylight on the 16th showed Americans still in possession of the landing zone, the chagrined North Vietnamese withdrew. They had had enough.

The back of the front had been broken. The NVA regiments left the battlefield littered with some six hundred corpses--and may have carried away hundreds of others. Perhaps half of the 66th Regiment's

22

two thousand men never fought again, being killed or permanently disabled in their very first battle. Seventy-nine Americans had been killed.

(From Dave R. Palmer, Summons of the Trumpet: U.S.-Vietnam in Perspective, pp. 98-102.)

* * * * *

As is the case with World War II and Korea, some of the most vivid accounts of small unit leadership in Vietnam are from the pen of S.L.A. Marshall. His account of what he calls "the Lost Command" during Operation Attleboro is a good example:

Whether it should have been fought through, other than with the heaviest of weapons, is a good question. That it became a wild melee, almost completely preoccupying large forces on our side, may be traced partly to the misfortunes of a single rifle company. It went forth, ran into the buzz saw, could not back away, suffered greatly, and became isolated. More than any other distraction in war, the unit cut off and fighting for survival is likely to make a battle plan fall apart. Such news supplies the touch of desperation, which is seldom needed.

As of high noon on 4 November there was no such condition. The First Battalion of the 27th Infantry was engaged with its fighting element in less than terrific trouble, although the day was infernally hot, and more so than the enemy fire.

In early afternoon, General de Saussure talked to Lieutenant Colonel Barrott, commander of the Second Battalion of the 27th. He wanted a rifle company to be inserted at the landing zone (called LZ Lime Zulu) slightly north of where First Battalion was fighting, and he wanted it to conduct from that point a sweep toward the sounds of the fire until it could link up with the battalion.

Barrett objected, saying, "We should use two companies."

"We don't have the time or the lift for it," de Saussure answered.

This conversation was monitored by Capt. Jim R. Paschall, Barrott's assistant S-3, who was then at the Dau Tieng air strip. Meloy heard of the order and mistakingly thought Barrott's battalion was coming in full strength, an illusion that lasted the day.

The mission fell to Charley Company, commanded by Capt. Gerald F. Currier, a Bay State soldier and OCS graduate. Currier at once formed his people (there were 124 men in the company) and told them what was coming.

As he described the task, it hardly sounded formidable:

"We are going in for a combat assault, but we are only going to sweep toward First Battalion."

Nothing was said about possibly engaging an entrenched enemy, and that specter was not being anticipated by anyone.

The company went lightly loaded by Vietnam standards, the riflemen carrying 140 rounds for their M-16's, with four frag and two smoke grenades per man. There were one thousand rounds for each M-60 machine gun, and four claymore mines with each platoon. The thump gunners carried 40 rounds for each M-79 launcher, and there were six of these per platoon. The figures say clearly enough that there was no anticipation of hard, heavy engagement.

Two hours after getting the order, the men closed on LZ Lima Zulu. Lieutenant Jerry W. Shelton, twenty-four, of Fort Worth, the artillery forward observer out of B/1/8th looked at his watch as the first slicks (troop-carrying helicopters) touched down. The time was 1412.

There was no one there to guide them, although Currier had been told that a liaison officer from Meloy's First Battalion would show the way. The landing had been cold, or almost so. Lieutenant Richard H. Brislin, twenty-eight, of Santa Ana, California, who commanded Third Platoon, heard three bullets, all of which were high. Whether they came from friend or enemy was beyond saying. Far off, machine guns were firing.

The company formed with Third and Second Platoons in line and abreast, while First and Weapons Platoon were strung out in column behind them. In that order, they continued to march forward or rather to execute a large wheel, at first on a 30-degree azimuth, then on a 70-degree, and last on a 180-degree, shifting about as the scout element revised its reading of the direction from which the noises of engagement came. Due to atmospheric conditions more than all else, it was very puzzling.

After about 150 meters they came to an open field above which the buzz of bullets was so persistent that for 10 minutes the company held in place and stayed low, "pinned down" being the popular way of saying it. Again, they were not sure whether the fire came from hostiles.

They then entered into an area of still greater mystery. There was not a person to be seen. But six cooking fires were blazing. Rice was boiling in the utensils. There was also a ton-sized stack of sacked rice. Around the field were foxholes freshly dug, while Vietcong-type hammocks and ponchos were draped about. The several sleeping bunks were made of bamboo. But there was also a large store of U.S. C-rations. Out of sheer curiosity, the troops stopped to look.

Captain Currier, who had been an A-Team man with Special Forces on a previous tour in Vietnam, ran about prodding the men on. "Destroy nothing," he shouted. "Get going. We must keep moving." He was worrying about getting to Meloy's battalion in time to be of help.

The men broke away quickly. Still, the pause had been a little too long for comfort. Several riflemen had been given time to toss around some of the loaded rice bags, thinking they would be lifted out. So doing, they set off two green flares that had been wired to one of the bags.

Specialist 4 Ronald T. Holt, a twenty-year-old from Dallas, remarked lugubriously, "If they didn't know we were coming, they now got it loud and clear." It was his main contribution to the afternoon's conversation and added little to the general enlightenment.

There was no feeling of alarm among the troops. Their supposition was that whatever danger existed must lie well beyond where they stood and next to the engaged battalion. The ground over which they advanced was quite flat and irregularly embellished with patches of waist-high elephant grass and bunched shrubs, standing no higher than a man. So they bumped right along. The tree growth in this piece of Indochina country is not true jungle (although the troops called it such), but little more than slightly dense and vine-ridden tropical forest. The growth is not spectacularly high, impassably thick, or so canopied that it shuts out the daylight.

* * * * *

One other entry--no minor detail but a major point of interest--completes the preliminary picture. Out of Dau Tieng, Colonel Barrott had come along with Captain Currier. He was marching with the company and making himself no more conspicuous than the average rifleman. Why he did it, there is no way of knowing. He had not been told he would take over if Meloy left the battle. Perhaps he had a hunch that the thing was big, that the entire (two-company) battalion would be needed, and that therefore he had best familiarize himself with the ground. Troops did not even bother to wonder about why he was present. The best guess is that he went because he was a responsible commander unafraid.

(From S.L.A. Marshall, Ambush, pp. 93-97.)

As heat casualties occurred, the GI's continued for about five hundred meters before they were hit. Two machine guns opened fire on the 2d Platoon, with AK-47's quickly adding their accurate fire to pin the unit in place. For several minutes, the left flank continued to advance while the 2d Platoon lay still under heavy fire.

From the rear of the formation, Captain Currier came running forward to see what had stopped Second Platoon. Tagging some distance directly behind him were the battalion commander, his RTO, and the whole Headquarters section.

Currier flopped down in the center of Second Platoon's line and staying there for all of two minutes. He said to his RTO, "Get it out to all platoon leaders that we've got to keep moving."

He half-rose as if to charge on and set the brave example.

Skiles had wiggled through the grass to get to Currier. "Captain, for God's sake, don't move," he said. "There's too much stuff out there."

Currier didn't answer.

Then Plat. Sgt. Floro Rivera, a Hawaiian, made his try; he could see other men getting to their knees as if making ready to follow Currier. "We can't do it, Captain, we just can't do it," Rivera said.

Currier jumped to his feet. Before he could lunge, a machine-gun burst caught him square on and riddled him from head to belly. Rivera caught him in his arms as he toppled backward, dead.

(From *ibid.*, p. 99.)

Two more soldiers were killed and the platoon hugged the ground for about another five minutes before LT Robert Adams took charge and ordered the men to advance, every man for himself. After twenty minutes, the farthest man forward had gone about twenty meters in the elephant grass. Unknowingly, they were advancing toward the VC's cleared fire lane--where the machine guns couldn't miss.

Via his RTO, Shelton was staying abreast of developments elsewhere. Lieutenant Bruce McDougal, on hearing of Currier's death, had taken command of the company. This done, he moved forward to the center of the company line. Next, he was on the radio, saying, "We need a LAW up here right right. And did we bring a flamethrower along?"

Yes, First Platoon had brought a flamethrower; Pfc. John Beresford was carrying it. After instructing First Platoon to go into perimeter, McDougal sent word that Beresford should come to him with the thrower.

What for?" asked Beresford, when the message was relayed to him. "I don't know how to use that damned thing."

By now, McDougal, having worked his way over to the hot flank, was still getting a world of cooperation from the non-engaged elements. Hearing Beresford's demurrer, Spec. 4 Tom Williams said, "Then let me have it. I know all about it."

The eager volunteer got two strides along on his mission, took a bullet through his right thigh, and thereon passed into the hands of the aid man.

McDougal, getting the word, asked for another volunteer. An eighteen-year-old from Taos, New Mexico, Spec. 4 Manuel A. Torrez, spoke up: "That's a job that calls for a man." Torrez picked up the flamethrower and started toward McDougal.

Shelton thought about calling on the artillery for support, but rejected the idea. He was still uncertain about the distance separating him from 1/27 and knew that an estimate of his own location might be off by as much as the space between them. Moreover, he thought he heard bullets whistling way overhead that were not coming from his immediate front. A couple of Hueys were orbiting above him, and although they were not on his [frequency] and remained unidentified, he popped smoke to give the folk upstairs a fix on his location.

McDougal had crawled on until he was ahead of Skiles by as much as six meters. Waller had moved right along with him. For the first time the kid from Indiana caught a glimpse of the enemy. Amid the trees, two Charlies squatted, pretty much in the open. They were garbed in U.S. field suits, had U.S. pots on their heads, and wore U.S. webbing.

"They look just like us," Waller whispered, not knowing as he said it that he and the lieutenant were as far forward as anyone in the company would get.

Because McDougal was there, the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Barrott, figured it was time for him to move, also. The VC fire had slackened, then died.

Barrott crawled on up. Behind him came Sgt. Howard C. Barker, the company RTO, Spec. 4 Larry Manifold, a thump gunner, and Spec. 4 Jay Robinson, who also carried an M-79.

They came to a stop on the right side of McDougal. Barrott took a good look, then said to Robinson, "Let me have your 79."

Barrott's first round hit one Charlie dead on and blew him backward into the bunker.

A smashing success, it was too much for Barrott. "Now's the time to charge them!" he shouted. With that, he made a great bound forward that took him, although he did not know it, right into the cleared fire lane.

A machine-gun burst ripped through the upper part of his body, killing him instantly. For going with him, Barker also died in the same way. Their bodies lay side by side in the lane, which was now a gut of fire.

McDougal, given no chance to stop Barrott because all had happened so quickly, might have gone into shock in that moment. Within one-quarter hour, he had taken over from a dead captain, then seen his battalion commander die two lengths away. Not in the slightest unnerved, however, he called to the others, "Don't try that! Nobody moves till I give the word." And he didn't back away an inch.

Not more than eight men had been close enough to the bunker line to see Barrott die; few more than that in the company yet knew that Currier had been killed.

That the company lacked the information suddenly dawned on Spec. 4 Randall E. Hall, twenty-one, of Breckenridge, Missouri. He crawled to the RT and raised the platoon sergeant, Sgt. 1st Cl. Louis Karnes, to tell him, "The skipper is dead. Lieutenant McDougal has the company. You are now in command of the platoon."

It was also Hall who worked forward to McDougal with the LAW, after it had been passed up hand-to-hand from the rear. A very modest soldier, Hall is the type that shines when things get tough.

McDougal tried only one LAW round, then gave it up. "When I'm prone, there are too many trees in the way, and I'm not going to stand," he said. This last was utmost wisdom, considering what had happened.

Torrez, with two riflemen coming along to cover him, got about halfway with the flamethrower. There someone (unidentified) stopped him, saying, "You better hold everything." The reason was that a message had just come over radio: First Battalion was coming on to relieve Charley Company. Its point was already within about 50 meters, somewhere over to the right front. This was no time to use a flamethrower. Torrez didn't cry about it; he had no wish to be a hero. (This report concerned the movement by Garrett's company from the north. It was premature. The company didn't get there.)

Shelton, curious, had been slithering around through the grass, trying to get a line on the enemy positions. What he at last found made him pop his eyes. The fire lanes were not cleared corridors such as rangers cut to safeguard a forest. They were rounded tunnels about twice the diameter of a hogshead with just a little brush on the bottom side. The slashing could not be seen from overhead. How many there were, he could only guess. But since the cone over which the elephant grass was being scythed was roughly 40 meters wide, he reckoned there must be two or three.

Shelton's thoughts gave him pause. Much care and many days had entered into the preparation of such a position. It must have been there when the first rice caches had been uncovered. But it could hardly have been manned. So when and how had the VC started laying the trap? He could not answer.

Far over to the left about 60 meters, a VC .50-caliber machine gun began firing. Startled, Shelton wondered why it only got off a couple of rounds, then ceased for a time, when it was well sited to sweep the entire clearing. Torrez was absorbed by the same phenomenon, and at last put two and two together. The .50 was being used as a signal piece. Every time it fired two rounds, the entire VC line came ablaze.

During this day of confusion in which Currier's company became isolated and the captain met sudden death, Meloy, in his fire-swept clearing behind Captain Cole's line (which was not far distant), was spared some of the pressure inherent in the unanticipated widening of the action.

Being at dead center of a field under attack from three sides, he was getting treble the sound effects, percussing, and impact on the nerves of any rifleman forward, which was bad enough. (I have a radio tape of this fight recorded next to Meloy's elbow. The roar, rattle, and whine lasting more than an hour is hair-raising beyond description. General H.K. Johnson, chief of staff, after hearing it at my request, said, "Nothing more terrifying has ever hit my ear.") On the other hand, there were offsetting factors that made Meloy strain less than he might have done. He did not yet know that Currier's company was becoming isolated. He still assumed mistakenly that Barrott's battalion was closed on the hot spot. And although he got the word when Barrott was killed, he did not know that Barrott had entered the battle to take over should he, Meloy, be laid low.

Meloy is not by nature a worrier. De Saussure, flying above the melee, was delighted by his calm, the steadiness of his voice. Through the late afternoon, Meloy continued to deceive himself that the Vietcong were pulling out. In his heart, he knew better. The enemy fire intensified, with more and more M-79 and mortar rounds exploding into the American ground. Meloy called out to anyone who would hear him, "Hell, I can't even stand up to take a leak," which plaint, duly recorded, may only have been a boast about his cystic capacity. Still, he bears witness, "I damn near wet my pants."

Being at the apex of the three-sided fight against Cole's people, Meloy got an exaggerated impression of enemy strength and persistence, which was almost inevitable. He sensed, or rather felt, that the far-left flank of the horseshoe position was the danger point, which was contrary to fact. Because he believed it, the pressure on him rose higher.

We now return to the nearby side show in which McDougal's people were fast becoming isolated.

On the far side of the fire tunnel from McDougal was an RTO, Private First Class Wallace, whose radio was the lieutenant's link with

all higher commands. Neither man could get to the other because of the bullet interdiction. So McDougal shouted across to Wallace what he wanted said and Wallace relayed it to higher-ups. It was an awkward way to manage the support for an operation, yet there was no practical alternative. Of it was to come large consequence.

Private First Class Leon Beason had moved up behind Waller, just off the fire tunnel. The enemy bunker had gone silent.

"Is it fairly safe here?" Beason asked.

"Well, pretty much, so far," said Waller. "Just don't move out to the right."

Beason said, "Thanks," and crawled off to the left to come up on line with Waller and McDougal.

From directly in front of him, and not more than 12 meters to his front, two more LMG's (light machine guns) blasted at Beason, and he rolled over dead. Waller could see, "and almost feel," the muzzle flash. He emptied his Colt .45 toward it. McDougal crawled back to Skiles, picked up an M-60, and ran toward the spot from which he had seen the two guns blasting, pulling the trigger as he moved. From the bush on which McDougal was targeting, Waller heard a prolonged scream.

Reversing himself, McDougal called to Shelton, "Now we got to move back--but just a little."

The withdrawal was not more than 15 meters. There this small group at the apex of action formed a rough perimeter, about one and one-half squads altogether.

"Hold your fire, unless you see a live target," McDougal told them. "We can't clear out those bunkers with what we have. If we keep firing, we only give the position away."

They acknowledged to one another that the lieutenant was perfectly right; they had nothing to gain by firing. Then suddenly, the strangest kind of thing happened. From out of the enemy position, amid the tumult, came running toward them an American soldier they had never seen before. It was his rare luck that none of McDougal's men pulled trigger in a reflex action. The only explanation of the enemy's failure to fire is that Charlie must have thought one of his own was doing a banzai. The newcomer proved to be Pfc. Mike Valesco, nineteen, of Los Angeles, an RTO belonging to A/1/27. He had been pressed into duty as an assistant medic by the other battalion, and while engaged in clearing casualties to a landing zone had become lost in the forest. He had wandered around for more than an hour and when he blundered into the enemy bunker line, had run through it and cleared away as fast as his legs would carry him. This youngster with the charmed life would spend the night with McDougal's men and share their tribulations.

Shortly afterward, Pfc. Hobbie Young thought he saw a figure moving through the grass from out of the tree line. He stood to look. A grenade exploded next to his leg, one great shard smashed into his jaw, and as he toppled, a machine-gun burst killed him.

Second Platoon's medic, Spec. 4 Rodney Althoff, already wounded by a grenade slug, moved over to see if he could do anything for Young. A bullet killed him before he could get to the dead man.

Why did McDougal stay there? There are two reasons. It was daylight; in addition to the dead, there were already at least 12 wounded men in the forward ground, half of them critically. That number immobilized the entire right wing. To clear them, the able-bodied men would have to stand, and that would be fatal. Furthermore, McDougal already knew that the way they had come was not blocked.

When the advance started, Sgt. Ernest Carnes had been dropped off to provide rear security. Along with him was Spec. 4 James D. Amos, twenty-one, of Tyler, Texas. Together they crewed an M-60 machine gun. And they were staying mighty low. For some minutes they had been under fire from rearward of them. One VC machine gun, helped by two riflemen, had them well pinned.

McDougal called every few minutes to ask, "How about it?"

Amos gave him the same answer: "We're catching hell."

Waller, having by this time used up all of his own supply of morphine on the wounded, took over what was left from Althoff's body. In a few minutes that supply was gone, also. More grenades came in on them. Waller continued with his patching. Before the sun went down, he was completely out of bandages.

Waller still did not know the head count of the wounded. As he moved about, responding to their cries, there came always derisive yells from the enemy bunker line: "Medic, medic, come help me, boy."

Around 1900, or approximately 40 minutes after dark closed down, McDougal made one more try to solve the problem the hard way.

Waller, who had moved deeper to the rear while looking for wounded, was still in Second Platoon territory. Lieutenant Adams had stayed in the background when McDougal took over direction of the fight.

Now the message came to Adams over the radio telephone from McDougal: "Will you take some grenadiers and try to get that bunker line?" Adams' RTO didn't want to pass it along to the lieutenant. Waller, who had just happened by, said, "I'll tell him."

Adams took it calmly enough, simply shrugging it off with the words, "I'll try, but it isn't much use."

What men, or how many men, he took along with him, there is no way of saying. Some soldiers are still counted missing from this action. In the darkness, no one saw them take off. How Adams was killed, and how the patrol was wiped out, are questions unanswerable. They went forth; they did not return. Much later Adams' body was found.

It was, whatever befell him, a sad waste, worth remembering only because when called on, they tried.

At 2000, McDougal decided that move he must. The rest of the company could not possibly form around him; that would put the entire outfit in jeopardy, directly to the fore of the horseshoed bunker line. On the other hand, if he could sideslip what was left of Second Platoon well to the left, the company could form a Custer ring at the center of the clearing. There they would all be without cover; the ground was bare, and he figured most of the men were too exhausted to dig in. But at least they would be together.

McDougal talked it over with some of the others--Waller, Skiles, Shelton, and Lieutenant Brislin. They knew the feeling of the other men; the sense of despair was spreading as swiftly as the belated realization that the company, hard beset, was completely cut off and more likely to be overrun than relieved before dawn came. That made them marvel at McDougal all the more. He wasn't turning a hair; he was quite cheerful. Instead of mooning about problems, he questioned them on practicalities.

They agreed that the move should, and probably could, be made. There were 19 wounded men scattered about in the right flank, although, at a guess, all but five could move that relatively short distance under their own power.

Staff Sergeant James A. Powe was told to take charge of the evacuation, Specs. 4 Andrew Campbell and David Kropp being detailed to help him. Sergeant Bobbie Dix, twenty-three, of McMinnville, Tennessee, was ordered to secure the route, that is, to post outguards who might stave off an enemy rush. Amos was instructed to get 10 men from Weapons Platoon who would assist in the guarding and carrying. Sergeant Carnes with the rest of Weapons Platoon would still cover the rear of the position. Thus, the arrangements.

As to how they worked out, the most dependable report directly quotes Sergeant Skiles as he spoke in front of the survivors:

"We got out all jumbled up, more mixed together than a going riot, just something of a mess. Disorganized? Yes--and more than a little demoralized."

The displacement necessitated that a company front, prone for the most part, and hence, mainly immobilized since the start of action, should rise and take its chances with the night.

It worked out well enough, save for one man. Private First Class Fountainez of Third Platoon, having ridden through the afternoon and early evening with no close-by near misses, joined the parade and was killed by a rifle bullet that penetrated his helmet and skull. The troops later agreed that a tree sniper must have done it. But tree snipers, unlike uncomely maidens, derive no special advantage from the dark. So if they stay in trees, or even dream they can snipe, they are very silly.

When the other fugitives from the storm got to the ground where McDougal first halted, there to face them right, the men closed together very tightly in the way that comes most naturally where humans have been fear-driven. Football teams also do it, although for other reasons. This company resolved into a huddle. What came about automatically completely astonished Pfc. Theodore T. Wyman, twenty, of Elgin, Illinois. In the fell clutch of circumstance, he and his comrades got only so far apart that each man could reach out and touch the comrade on his right and left. Nothing else in these minutes seemed very important, and McDougal, watching and perhaps learning something, let it go. It was a reaction he had never guessed before-- that men confronted by an immediate and common danger compulsively draw closer and closer together and so comfort, if not strengthen, one another. What had happened through propinquity was at the same time not too bad tactically. Bunched as they were, they might have been taken out by a couple of mortar rounds. But there was an opposite risk. If McDougal were to spread his men at normal intervals, a couple of Congs, getting inside the circle, might be able to stampede the lot of them. The enemy is good at that kind of thing, and the men were too slowed and tired to think things out. To compel them now to take up what the book would call "a secure disposition" would be a little bit of hell.

The decision, made empirically, was sustained by its consequence. McDougal had warned them all to preserve silence. If the VC came on, no man was to fire unless he had a live target in his sights. All others would hold in place, doing nothing.

Five or six times during the night the Congs came on, although always in light groups. Each such move was a probe by a small patrol, apparently seeking to determine how the U.S. deployment was arranged, always without success. Specialist Hall was the man on the spot in one of these light exchanges. He was alerted when a grenade exploded a few feet directly in front of him. Then he saw two figures in silhouette charging him. He emptied his M-16 at them and killed both.

Minutes later another pair charged Torrez; he killed them before they could grenade. Sergeant Dix saw a figure crawling toward Amos; even in the dark, he could determine the outline of the GI helmet and the issue jungle suit. Still, he put two bursts from his rifle into the crawling man. Then he saw a second figure charging in only a few feet behind him; the target was given the rest of Dix's clip, right in the chest.

That is pretty much how the thing went all along--individuals fighting off other individuals, other men listening but doing little or nothing. Yet from the darkness out beyond, VC leaders could be heard shouting orders, as if they had a considerable force in hand. After the shooting died, there came the noise of many men hacking away at bamboo.

It was a position without foxholes, so possibly the well-known saying that atheists are not to be found in such is irrelevant. But it was still a very prayerful circle. Later, in front of the assembled company, Charley Brown of Cleveland said, "We all asked the help of the Lord that night," and no one saw fit to contradict him.

Not until dawn came did they feel some slight sense of relief. McDougal then reformed them in a much larger circle and they began to dig. Although the Congs still held forth within the tree line, the lieutenant gave no thought to resumption of the attack. It had been a fool idea in the first place. The VC were even less willing to quit the cover of the bunker line and come charging into the open. So there ensued a prolonged standoff, with no serious exchange of fires. The stand of elephant grass between them effectively hid each side from the other, and both were willing to leave well enough alone.

* * * * *

From dawn onward, there came promises over the RT that a relief force would be there quickly. That pricked them. When it didn't materialize, they began to gripe so lustily that McDougal knew they were recovering under their own power. From 0800 on, they could hear the firing of the relief column attacking toward them. By 0930, they were staying inert because the bullets from A/2/27's weapons were slashing the foliage round about them. Not until 1050 was the junction made. When they cleared away and thereafter, they were vastly proud that they had soldiered for one night under McDougal. All the way, he had acted sensibly and kept his chin high. More than that is not to be expected of any fighting man.

Two days later McDougal was relieved of command for having played a bad part in the fight. The Saigon press corps had made a lion of Private First Class Wallace, the RTO, who from the far side of the fire tunnel had simply relayed McDougal's messages to the outside. The

story was broadcast everywhere that a private had saved a company after a junior officer, taking over in an emergency, had failed it. Wallace was decorated, as just possibly he deserved. The Stars & Stripes (Tokoyo edition) named him its soldier of 1966. All around, it was one more case of the press presuming to know, while not knowing at all.

McDougal, being considerable of a man, made no protest. His career and reputation were saved by the men who had been with him, including the gunner, Lieutenant Shelton. Outraged by what had happened, they told their story to a visiting general. "I cannot imagine how any infantry officer could have performed more bravely or sensibly," Shelton declared. "He saved his command."

By the outsider the case was put before Major General Weyand, the division commander. Commenting, "I could not believe what I heard in the first place," Weyand personally investigated. McDougal came out of it with a Silver Star, and was once again in command of a company that with good reason rated him a great guy.

(From *ibid.*, pp. 100-113.)

* * * * *

Although no information on the background of the following individuals was available to the research committee (beyond that provided in the citation itself), the following citations for award of the Medal of Honor illustrate the superb leadership often displayed by leaders in Vietnam.

DONLON, ROGER HUGH C.

Rank and organization: Captain, U.S. Army. Place and date: Near Nam Dong, Republic of Vietnam, 6 July 1964. Entered service at: Fort Chaffee, Ark. Born: 30 January 1934, Saugerties, N.Y. G.O. No.: 41, 17 December 1964. Citation: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while defending a U.S. military installation against a fierce attack by hostile forces. Capt. Donlon was serving as the commanding officer of the U.S. Army Special Forces Detachment A-726 at Camp Nam Dong when a reinforced Viet Cong battalion suddenly launched a full-scale, predawn attack on the camp. During the violent battle that ensued, lasting 5 hours and resulting in heavy casualties on both sides, Capt. Donlon directed the defense operations in the midst of an enemy barrage of mortar shells, falling grenades, and extremely heavy gunfire. Upon the initial onslaught, he swiftly marshaled his forces and ordered the removal of the needed ammunition from a blazing building. He then dashed through a hail of small arms and exploding handgrenades to abort a breach of the main gate. En route to this position he detected an enemy demolition team of 3 in the proximity of the main gate and quickly annihilated them. Although exposed to the intense grenade attack, he then succeeded in reaching a 60mm mortar position despite sustaining a severe stomach wound as he was within 5 yards of the gunpit. When he

discovered that most of the men in this gunpit were also wounded, he complete disregarded his own injury, directed their withdrawal to a location 30 meters away, and again risked his life by remaining behind and covering the movement with the utmost effectiveness. Noticing that his team sergeant was unable to evacuate the gunpit he crawled toward him and, while dragging the fallen soldier out of the gunpit, an enemy mortar exploded and inflicted a wound in Capt. Donlon's left shoulder. Although suffering from multiple wounds, he carried the abandoned 60mm mortar weapon to a new location 30 meters away where he found 3 wounded defenders. After administering first aid and encouragement to these men, he left the weapon with them, headed toward another position, and retrieved a 57mm recoilless rifle. Then, with great courage and coolness under fire, he returned to the abandoned gunpit, evacuated ammunition for the 2 weapons, and while crawling and dragging the urgently needed ammunition, received a third wound on his leg by an enemy handgrenade. Despite his critical physical condition, he again crawled 175 meters to an 81mm mortar position and directed firing operations which protected the seriously threatened east sector of the camp. He then moved to an eastern 60mm mortar position and upon determining that the vicious enemy assault had weakened, crawled back to the gunpit with the 60mm mortar, set it up for defensive operations, and turned it over to 2 defenders with minor wounds. Without hesitation, he left this sheltered position, and moved from position to position around the beleaguered perimeter while hurling handgrenades at the enemy and inspiring his men to superhuman effort. As he bravely continued to move around the perimeter, a mortar shell exploded, wounding him in the face and body. As the long awaited daylight brought defeat to the enemy forces and their retreat back to the jungle leaving behind 54 of their dead, many weapons, and grenades, Capt. Donlon immediately reorganized his defenses and administered first aid to the wounded. His dynamic leadership, fortitude, and valiant efforts inspired not only the American personnel but the friendly Vietnamese defenders as well and resulted in the successful defense of the camp. Capt. Donlon's extraordinary heroism, at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty are in the highest traditions of the U.S. Army and reflect great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of his country.

FRITZ, HAROLD A.

Rank and organization: Captain, U.S. Army, Troop A, 1st Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. Place and date: Binh Long Province, Republic of Vietnam, 11 January 1969. Entered service at: Milwaukee, Wis. Born: 21 February 1944, Chicago, Ill. Citation: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. Capt. (then 1st Lt.) Fritz, Armor, U.S. Army, distinguished himself while serving as a platoon leader with Troop A, near Quan Loi. Capt. Fritz was leading his 7-vehicle armored column along Highway 13 to meet and escort a truck convoy when the column suddenly came under intense crossfire from a reinforced enemy

company deployed in ambush positions. In the initial attack, Capt. Fritz' vehicle was hit and he was seriously wounded. Realizing that his platoon was completely surrounded, vastly outnumbered, and in danger of being overrun, Capt. Fritz leaped to the top of his burning vehicle and directed the positioning of his remaining vehicles and men. With complete disregard for his wounds and safety, he ran from vehicle to vehicle in complete view of the enemy gunners in order to reposition his men, to improve the defenses, to assist the wounded, to distribute ammunition, to direct fire, and to provide encouragement to his men. When a strong enemy force assaulted the position and attempted to overrun the platoon, Capt. Fritz manned a machinegun and through his exemplary action inspired his men to deliver intense and deadly fire which broke the assault and routed the attackers. Moments later a second enemy force advanced to within 2 meters of the position and threatened to overwhelm the defenders. Capt. Fritz, armed only with a pistol and bayonet, led a small group of his men in a fierce and daring charge which routed the attackers and inflicted heavy casualties. When a relief force arrived, Capt. Fritz saw that it was not deploying effectively against the enemy positions, and he moved through the heavy enemy fire to direct its deployment against the hostile positions. This deployment forced the enemy to abandon the ambush site and withdraw. Despite his wounds, Capt. Fritz returned to his position, assisted his men, and refused medical attention until all of his wounded comrades had been treated and evacuated. The extraordinary courage and selflessness displayed by Capt. Fritz, at the repeated risk of his own life above and beyond the call of duty, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the U.S. Army and reflect the greatest credit upon himself, his unit, and the Armed Forces.

HOWARD, ROBERT L.

Rank and organization: First Lieutenant, U.S. Army, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces. Place and date: Republic of Vietnam, 30 December 1968. Entered service at: Montgomery, Ala. Born: 11 July 1939, Opelika, Ala. Citation: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. 1st Lt. Howard (then Sfc.), distinguished himself while serving as platoon sergeant of an American-Vietnam platoon which was on a mission to rescue a missing American soldier in enemy controlled territory in the Republic of Vietnam. The platoon had left its helicopter landing zone and was moving out on its mission when it was attacked by an estimated 2-company force. During the initial engagement, 1st Lt. Howard was wounded and his weapon destroyed by a grenade explosion. 1st Lt. Howard saw his platoon leader had been wounded seriously and was exposed to fire. Although unable to walk, and weaponless, 1st Lt. Howard unhesitatingly crawled through a hail of fire to retrieve his wounded leader. As 1st Lt. Howard was administering first aid and removing the officer's equipment, an enemy bullet struck 1 of the ammunition pouches on the lieutenant's belt, detonating

several magazines of ammunition. 1st Lt. Howard momentarily sought cover and then realizing that he must rejoin the platoon, which had been disorganized by the enemy attack, he again began dragging the seriously wounded officer toward the platoon area. Through his outstanding example of indomitable courage and bravery 1st Lt. Howard was able to rally the platoon into an organized defense force. With complete disregard for his safety, 1st Lt. Howard crawled from position to position, administering first aid to the wounded, giving encouragement to the defenders and directing their fire on the encircling enemy. For 3 1/2 hours 1st Lt. Howard's small force and supporting aircraft successfully repulsed enemy attacks and finally were in sufficient control to permit the landing of rescue helicopters. 1st Lt. Howard personally supervised the loading of his men and did not leave the bullet-swept landing zone until all were aboard safely. 1st Lt. Howard's gallantry in action, his complete devotion to the welfare of his men at the risk of his life were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit on himself, his unit, and the U.S. Army.

STUMPF, KENNETH E.

Rank and organization: Staff Sergeant (then Sp4c.), U.S. Army, Company C, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division. Place and date: Near Duc Pho, Republic of Vietnam, 25 April 1967. Entered service at: Milwaukee, Wis. Born: 28 September 1944, Neenah, Wis. Citation: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. S/Sgt. Stumpf distinguished himself while serving as a squad leader of the 3d Platoon, Company C, on a search and destroy mission. As S/Sgt. Stumpf's company approached a village, it encountered a North Vietnamese rifle company occupying a well fortified bunker complex. During the initial contact, 3 men from his squad fell wounded in front of a hostile machinegun emplacement. The enemy's heavy volume of fire prevented the unit from moving to the aid of the injured men, but S/Sgt. Stumpf left his secure position in a deep trench and ran through the barrage of incoming rounds to reach his wounded comrades. He picked up 1 of the men and carried him back to the safety of the trench. Twice more S/Sgt. Stumpf dashed forward while the enemy turned automatic weapons and machineguns upon him, yet he managed to rescue the remaining 2 wounded squad members. He then organized his squad and led an assault against several enemy bunkers from which continuously heavy fire was being received. He and his squad successfully eliminated 2 of the bunker positions, but one to the front of the advancing platoon remained a serious threat. Arming himself with extra handgrenades, S/Sgt. Stumpf ran over open ground, through a volley of fire directed at him by a determined enemy, toward the machinegun position. As he reached the bunker, he threw a handgrenade through the aperture. It was immediately returned by the occupants, forcing S/Sgt. Stumpf to take cover. Undaunted, he pulled the pins on 2 more grenades, held them for a few seconds after activation,

then hurled them into the position, this time successfully destroying the emplacement. With the elimination of this key position, his unit was able to assault and overrun the enemy. S/Sgt. Stumpf's relentless spirit of aggressiveness, intrepidity, and ultimate concern for the lives of his men, are in the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself and the U.S. Army.

T
B
C

TAB C
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allen, Peter. The Yom Kippur War. New-York: Scribner, 1982.
- Appleman, Roy K. South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu, June-November 1950. Washington: GPO, 1961.
- Beatie, Russel H. Road to Manassas: The Growth of Union Command in the Eastern Theater from the Fall of Fort Sumter to the First Battle of Bull Run. New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1961.
- Bidwell, Shelford. The Chindit War: The Campaign in Burma. London: Hadder and Stoughton, 1979; New York: Macmillan, 1980.
- Blumenson, Martin. The Patton Papers. 2 vols. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1972, 1974.
- Blumenson, Martin and Stokesbury, James L. Masters of the Art of Command. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975.
- Caidin, Martin. The Tigers are Burning. Los Angeles: Pinnacle Books, 1974.
- Callwell, C.E. Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice. London: HMSO, 1906.
- Carell, Paul. The Foxes of the Desert. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1961.
- Catton, Bruce. The Army of the Potomac. 3 vols. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1962.
- _____. Grant Takes Command. Boston: Little, Brown, 1968.
- _____. A Stillness at Appomattox. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1953.
- Chambers, Lenoir. Stonewall Jackson. 2 vols. New York: W. Morrow, 1959.
- Clarke, Dwight L. Stephen Watts Kearney: Soldier of the West. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961.
- Cole, Hugh M. The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge. U.S. Army in World War II, The European Theater of Operations. Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1965.
- _____. The Lorraine Campaign. U.S. Army in World War II, The European Theater of Operations. Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army Historical Division, 1950.

TAB C

241

- Condon, Don, ed. Combat: European Theater, World War II. New York: Dell, 1958.
- Crook, George. General George Crook, His Autobiography. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1946.
- Cuneo, John. Robert Rogers of the Rangers. New York: Oxford University Press, 1959.
- Davis, Burke. Jeb Stuart: The Last Cavalier. New York: Rinehart, 1957.
- Freeman, Douglas S. Lee's Lieutenants. 3 vols. New York: Scribner, 1942.
- Guderian, Heinz. Panzer Leader. New York: Ballantine, 1957.
- Gugeler, Russell A. Combat Actions in Korea. Army Historical Series. Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1970.
- Hackett, General Sir John. The Profession of Arms. New York: Macmillan, 1983.
- Hamilton, James. The Battle of Fort Donelson. New York: Curtis Books, 1968.
- Harrison, Gordon A. Cross-Channel Attack. U.S. Army in World War II, The European Theater of Operations. Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1951.
- Hassler, Warren W., Jr. George B. McClellan: Shield of the Union. Baton Rouge, LA: University of Louisiana Press, 1957.
- Henry, Robert S. "First with the Most" Forrest. Indianapolis, Indiana: Bobbs-Merrill, 1944.
- Herzog, Chaim. The War of Atonement: October, 1973. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1975.
- Horne, Alistair. To Lose A Battle, France 1940. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1969.
- Hunt, Aurora. Major General James Henry Carleton, 1814-1873: Western Frontier Dragoon. Glendale, CA: Arthur H. Glark, 1958.
- Hunter, Charles N. Galahad. San Antonio, TX: Naylor, 1963.
- Irving, David. The Trail of the Fox. New York: Dutton, 1977.
- Jacob, Bruce. Heroes of the Army: The Medal of Honor and Its Winners. 1st Ed. New York: Berkeley, 1956.

- James, D. Clayton. The Years of MacArthur. 2 vols. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975.
- Jones, Virgil C. Ranger Mosby. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1944.
- Kahalani, Avigdor. Fortress '77. Edited by Cadets Sean Ryan and John Capp, 10 May 1982. [USMA History Department unpublished manuscript.]
- Keegan, John. The Face of Battle. New York: Vintage Books, 1977.
- _____. Six Armies in Normandy. New York: Viking Press, 1982.
- Lettow-Vorbeck, Paul. East African Campaigns. New York: Speller, 1957.
- Lewis, Lloyd. Sherman: Fighting Prophet. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1932.
- Liddell Hart, B.H. The German Generals Talk. New York: William Morrow, 1948.
- _____, ed. The Sword and the Pen: Selections from the World's Greatest Military Writings. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1976.
- Long, Gavin. MacArthur as Military Commander. New York: Van Nostrand, 1969.
- Lucas, James S. War on the Eastern Front, 1941-1945: The Common Soldier in Russia. London: Janes Publishing Company, 1979.
- MacDonell, Archibald G. Napoleon and His Marshals. New York: Macmillan and Company, 1960.
- Mahon, John K. The War of 1812. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1972.
- Mano, Lida. Bloody Buna. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974.
- Marshall-Cornwall, James. Grant as Military Commander. New York: Van Nostrand, 1970.
- Marshall, S.L.A. Ambush. New York: Cowles Book Company, 1969.
- _____. Bird: The Christmastide Battle. New York: Cowles Book Company, 1968.
- _____. Night Drop: The American Airborne Invasion of Normandy. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1962.
- Masters, John. The Road Past Mandalay: A Personal Narrative. New York: Harper, 1961.

- McCortney, Clarence E. Little Mac: The Life of General George B. McClellan. Philadelphia: Dorrance, 1940.
- Murfin, James W. The Glean of Bayonets: The Battle of Antietam, September 17, 1863. New York: A.S. Barnes, 1963.
- The New Yorker Book of War Pieces. New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1947.
- Nutting, Anthony. Lawrence of Arabia: The Man and the Motive. New York: C.N. Potter, 1961.
- Ogburn, Charlton. The Marauders. New York: Harper, 1956.
- Palmer, Dave R. Summons of the Trumpet. San Rafael, California: Presidio Press, 1978.
- Pogue, Forrest C. George C. Marshall. 3 vols. New York: Viking, 1973.
- Roland, Charles P. Albert Sidney Johnston: Soldier of Three Republics. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1964.
- Rothenberg, Gunther E. Anatomy of the Israeli Army. London: Batsford, 1979.
- Ryan, Cornelius. A Bridge Too Far. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1974.
- Sajer, Guy. The Forgotten Soldier. New York: Harper & Row, 1971.
- Selby, John. Stonewall Jackson as Military Commander. New York: Van Nostrand, 1968.
- Sherman, Frederick C. Combat Command: The American Aircraft Carriers in the Pacific War. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1950.
- Sherman, W.T. Memoirs of General William T. Sherman, by himself. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1957.
- Slim, William. Defeat Into Victory. London: Cassell, 1956.
- Small Unit Actions During the German Campaign in Russia. Department of the Army Pamphlet 20-269. Washington, D.C.: July, 1953.
- Sykes, Christopher. Orde Wingate. Cleveland: World Publishing, 1959.
- Thomas, Wilbur D. General George H. Thomas: The Indomitable Warrior. New York: Exposition, 1964.
- Time-Life Books. The Soldiers and the Old West. New York: Time-Life Books, 1973.

- Toland, John. Battle: The Story of the Bulge. New York: Random House, 1959.
- Tregaskis, Richard. Vietnam Diary. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1963.
- Utley, Robert M., ed. Life in Custer's Cavalry. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977.
- Van Every, Dale. Forth to the Wilderness: The First American Frontier, 1754-1774.
- Von Mellenthin, F.W. Panzer Battles: A Study of the Employment of Armor in the Second World War. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1956.
- Wallace, Willard M. The Soul of the Lion: A Biography of General Joshua L. Chamberlain. New York: T. Nelson, 1960.
- Whiting, Charles. Decision at St.-Vith. New York: Ballantine, 1969.
- Wilson, James H. Under the Old Flag. 2 vols. New York: D. Appleton, 1912.
- Woodham-Smith, Cecil. The Reason Why. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1963.